

Burton "Bud" Durr

# Gold Fever



GOLD FEVER

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# **GOLD FEVER**

BOSTON. "BUD" DICK



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BURTON "BUD" DURR

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## CHAPTER ONE

**B**ack as far as man could remember, gold had been that which everyone sought; and every time someone would claim to have discovered some of it in a different place, there would be a mad dash to place a claim on a spot of ground that had yielded what was thought to be a rich strike. Sometimes it was, and sometimes it was not. But if it was fool's gold or the real thing, it usually became an important discovery. The fool's gold often turned out to be iron ore and became a source of work to a lot of hungry families.

But if the original discovery turned out to be gold, the man who found it made money while the discovery lasted then became a lost hope to the man who made the discovery if the man was not too intelligent. Those that sold property around the claim became wealthy real estate tycoons as long as they could dupe the greedy public into thinking they had a gold claim. There were thousands of people that wanted a better life, and therefore, they wanted to join the thousands that gambled all to make the trip only to turn back because of the hardship of travel across the prairies and the desert still to attack. Some recognized the dangers and said those that turned back were the fortunate ones.

Still others hadn't the resources or the courage to undergo the long, hard voyage for just a chance to strike it rich. Then there was Buster Hagen, a strapping young man, still growing and already 6'4" and 240 pounds of muscle, who was starting a journey from a

different direction and for a different reason. He was from a very small town just west of Lubbock, Texas, called Morton. Buster was the second of three boys. Roger was the oldest and had been told that if he kept his life in order, the ranch would go to him when his father was no longer able to work the cattle business, which required the muscle Buster already had and as such could handle the hard work it required to make the ranch successful. For some reason, Roger and Buster could not see eye to eye about anything, whether it be the younger brother Mark, running the cattle, what a woman should be like, or anything important to a happy life.

When Buster reached the age of twenty-one, he'd heard all the stories about the gold that was just lying around waiting for someone to come along and claim it, but he wasn't too anxious to find gold. No. He wanted to find land that he could raise cattle on. So he took the four horses that he had raised for himself and took his favorite that he'd named Goldy for his riding horse and two of the others; he packed all his personal belongings on special backpacks and said goodbye to his father and younger brother, hugging them and said sadly, "I wish Ma were here to say goodbye to." (She'd been gored almost to death when one of the long-horned steers went crazy and started after first one person then another.) His mother had been unafraid and had tried to calm the beast down without waiting for one of the hands to come and help her. It was obviously a mistake on her part, and everybody on the ranch loved her and missed her good cooking at every meal. Fortunately, Buster's oldest sister, Marion, was the closest to Helene and had all the qualities of her mother that the other two girls didn't have a clue about, taking over for their mother. Both Connie and Barb were just hoping to find themselves a rich and handsome man to marry and get away from the ranch. Unfortunately, a town of less than three thousand people wasn't overrun with spare males or with females of the quality Buster was looking for either.

After Buster got his things all packed, said his goodbyes, and started on his journey to find some good land to start his own ranch

with, he of course headed in a northerly direction to skirt the very large city of Amarillo by traveling along the old trails he found along Highway 385. The first day, the horses were still fresh, and he made it to Hereford which was about one hundred miles away. There was a small campground there for him to unpack his horses and set up a small camp with his one-man tent.

One thing that was essential on a trip such as Buster had planned was weapons to defend himself against the wildlife he was pretty certain to encounter along the way. He kept his .45 in the tent with him but left his Winchester in a scabbard just outside the tent. Buster was an excellent shot with both weapons, and he knew that somewhere along the way he'd have to prove that fact. Buster's father had encouraged him to be proficient in the handling of weapons, but he'd asked Buster to swear that he'd never be the one to initiate the battle. Or using his prowess with them to show off. Somewhere there would be a man that had spent his life using his guns and would use trickery to get the upper hand. So Buster never lost a gun battle, because he avoided getting into one.

The next day, Buster decided that he wasn't going to tax his horses on the rough mountain trails he was going to have to travel to reach the outskirts of Amarillo, where he would find the quickest way to avoid the traffic of Amarillo and get on 297, which he wanted to follow to the border of Oklahoma. He looked for a safe place just beyond Amarillo to camp for the night, after which he thought it would be a fairly easy trip to get over the border into Oklahoma. The place he found was called Masterson, and it had camping facilities which came in handy. But he'd traveled farther than he'd planned, going about eighty miles. Looking at his maps, he figured he still had about sixty miles to travel, and he'd traded off to riding Bill, his relief mount, so Goldy would get a rest. All his horses liked to run, but he didn't let them go for very long before he'd slow them down; because it was hard on the pack horses, so much so that he decided to use Bill every fourth day and give one or the other of the pack horses



a rest. There was a long way to go to hit the mining country. Every time he looked at his map, he wondered if he'd been out of his mind to travel by horse all the way to the mining country. Finally, he decided to follow Highway 287 until he got to U.S. Highway 70, which would take him through Denver and over a fairly good route to cross the mountains and finally come to the outskirts of Las Vegas where he would start his quest of some land large enough to start his ranch.

So far he hadn't needed to answer questions about traveling with three horses being led along behind him. For that he was grateful, mainly because he didn't want the information to get there ahead of him. But his loneliness would cease when he got close to Denver. In the meantime, he had a long stretch of mountainous country to navigate, and he didn't want to wear his mounts out before he got to Denver; so he took his time, stopping at every little village or country store to replenish his supplies, rest, talk to anyone that would listen to him, and get the news about the now-failing mines of the gold country.

With Buster having to stop so often to replenish his supplies, he was running low on his supply of cash. Not that cash shortage bothered him; his grandfather had left all the grandchildren very well fixed for life. The problem was getting to a bank where he could have the money transferred to an account for him. He had found no problem getting the account transferred to a bank in Denver, but they were reluctant to transfer it to any of the banks in Las Vegas because of the instability of some of the new banks in the new town. But finally he found a bank that would handle the transfer of funds, so he didn't have to carry his small fortune around through country that was known for characters of less than the kindest of manner toward strangers.

Buster was still a long way away from the new towns of Nevada, but he'd come a long way without problems he couldn't handle, and going through the area around Denver was an education for him. He couldn't wait for the time he would get up in the mountains and fewer

people. The air being not only cooler but a lot harder to breath made him more careful with the amount of work he made his small caravan of horses do in traveling so high up in the mountains, reaching around eight or nine thousand feet by the time he got to the summit. Then he had to hold Goldy back, because she wanted to run all the time after hauling him up to those heights.

## CHAPTER TWO

**T**he long trip from Denver to Las Vegas was finally over. But Buster was not at all thrilled about arriving in that new town sitting out in the desert with hardly anyone around. Somebody had decided that the law was different out in the desert and that they could get away with starting a gambling mecca out there in the desert where the law wouldn't bother them. He had no idea that he could have invested his money in a plot of that snake- and bug-infested area that would slowly, at first, grow to be one of the faster growing cities in the whole of the U.S. regardless of the heat and dust of a desert location such as he was in a hurry to get away from.

But if his cattle were to grow healthy, they would have to feed on some good grass. And good grass was nowhere to be seen; just sand and desert came up on Google pictures every place he looked, and Buster's hopes took a serious nosedive. But then he stopped and took a wild chance. If he could get adequate water to the land he was hoping to purchase, he would have an even better chance of getting a jump start on raising his cattle. With water supplied to his land, he could raise hay for someone else's cattle and put himself in a position of making friends with his neighbors, who would be in a position to help him begin breeding the kind of cattle he knew were the best for raising on an arid soil and what he was sure would become dry grass unless he could make some kind of deal to obtain the very expensive water to get that jump start on his ranch.

But first he wanted to learn a little about the land on which he'd been forced to purchase with an area large enough to raise cattle and a crop large enough to give him money to expand. With the desolation of the land available around the relatively new city of Las Vegas, he decided to go on north to the northern part of the state of Nevada to give it every chance to show him a possible plot of land for completing his wish.

He set off again, avoiding the really beautiful landscape around the Death Valley area, and began hitting the various villages of the mining towns, whether they were mining for gold, silver, copper, or whatever kind of metal that was being found in the northern part of the state. He finally wound up in Truckee, California where a goodly portion of gold had been found. But Truckee was down in a valley and looked as though the snow had not yet cleared up. Also evident was the lack of any decent land for a ranch.

Around the time he visited Truckee, they were running trains through about fifty times a day, one going to Virginia City and beyond to Gold Hill; all of the land over which the trains traveled on were so mountainous and so desolate as to convince him that with the desert in the south and the mountains in the north, there just wasn't enough good land to start his ranch. Since there were many cases of claims still being stolen by roughnecks that didn't seem to care who they hurt as long as the person was protecting his claim, Buz (as he became known) stopped at one of the sheriff's offices and offered his hand at helping stop the rash of claim grabbers. Of course the sheriff wanted to know if "Buz" could handle himself in a gun fight. He could already see that with his size, the only way anybody would pick a fight with him was to draw a weapon and shoot him. To answer that question, Buz had his .45 in his hand before the sheriff could finish the question, and Buz said, "Step outside and pick a target for me so I don't damage your office, Sheriff. Then I can show you how straight I shoot." So the sheriff walked outside, started to point at an object on the ground about fifty feet away, and before he could finish pointing

to the object and turn around, he heard the explosion behind him and the old whiskey bottle shattered.

"Whoa!" he said. "I would have to guess that you are handy with that monster cannon you carry. Where did you learn to shoot like that?"

"Been a cattle rancher all my life, and living where I used to, you had to deal with rattlers and prairie dogs and occasionally some drunk cowhand that thought he was Billy the Kid or Butch Cassidy or one of them outlaws that were hiding out down in Texas. I had to show them kinda guys who was boss on our land, and they soon learned. Some of them would wind up with their arms in a sling unable to work," replied Buz.

"Well, I just happen to be looking for somebody to replace one of my men that got shot in a bar the other day, so I'll give you his badge when I get it from him. He won't like you a little bit for taking his job, so I'd suggest you watch your back when he's around. He carries a big bowie knife that he uses with his good hand. He's got a bad temper, which is how he got in a fight with the wrong guy. He also thinks he's the fastest with a gun of anybody around here too. So just be prepared for anything when he happens to be around you. Don't hesitate to arrest him if he gives you any kind of trouble. I should never hired him, but I needed another deputy."

"OK, Sheriff. I appreciate the warning, and I'll keep my eye on him for any indication that he's been drinking, but I can't do anything outside the law until I get his badge. I'd like you to let me know when you get him to come in and turn in his badge. You might need my help to get it back, and I wouldn't like to see my new boss get hurt because of me," said Buz.

"Well, that's mighty white of you, Buz. You and me's gonna get along jest fine," replied the sheriff.



## CHAPTER THREE

**S**o finally Buz was wearing a deputy's badge and had already had his showdown with the now-demoted deputy whose badge it had been. It was pointed out to him that the deputy was the very reason there had been an opening at all. That deputy had been taking handouts from the owners of the section of bars in the town that had been having trouble for a long while. Buz was given the job without any hesitation on the sheriff's account. Just looking at him, he could tell that this was an honest man.

After officially signing him on, Sheriff Mahoney decided that he wanted to know a little more about him other than that he was so quick and deadly accurate with his monster .45, so he said, "Have a seat, Deputy, I want to know a little about you. Where did you come from and things personal about you. You look pretty young for a man that handles a weapon the way you do. So tell me all you care to share with me, and I'll take what you give me and won't bother you again as long as you do your job and don't get into any trouble. I consider myself to be friends with all but a couple of my deputies, and I'll stand behind any one of you that gets in a fix. How about it?"

"Well, Sheriff, Ah've been a little stupid. Ya see, Ah've ridden all the way up here from the state of Texas thinking Ah wuz gonna find me some abandoned land where I could start me a nice-sized ranch where Ah cud raise me some cattle and some wheat to sell and begin ta start a herd of beef cattle that Ah cud make grow bigger than

mah family's. All thet way up from Texas tuh have people ta stare at me and wonder what I was haulin' on my litle caravan up through these rugged but purty mountains, just ta find no good land for the raisin' of any good beef cattle in this whole state. So Ah've decided to help some of the folks around here that still work their mines. Ah've been told there's a lot of trouble keepin' mean people from tryin' to take over their mines. The amount of work that must have gone inta diggin' them shafts, it jest ain't right for some roughneck to come along and say, 'I want this shaft. Ah'll pay you X number dollars and you just move on and find yourself a new place.' Don't seem a bit fair to me, an' Ah'd like ta be the one to make things safe for them that ain't so tough they can defend what's theirs.

"When Ah turned twenty-one, Ah decided Ah was goin' to have me a ranch bigger than my lucky brother was goin' ta git when my pa decided to give the ranch to thuh oldest son in the family and the rest of us could have a place to work. Ah cud see ahead of time that four of us couldn't work the ranch and have one of us get all the money 'cept what we wud be paid. It jest din't seem right that Pa couldn't say we'd each git a percent if we all had to work the same, so Ah up and left. No hard feelin's, jist a bit hard to leave my ma's good cookin'," related Buz.

The sheriff was astounded, but he did have a few words for Buz. He said, "Well! You sure took the hard way to come all the way up here for nothing, my friend. And I'm glad you stopped off here. There's so many changes taking place with the mines all shutting down, people moving out, others don't have the money to move on and find other work, and with the Depression, people are starving. Others are stealing whatever they think might have some value and selling it for less than half what they are worth. Maybe, if you are as intelligent as I think you are, I'll just put you to work finding out who's doing the buying and from whom they are buying, and you and me can help solve some of the mysterious crookedness going on around these parts. I been sheriff of these parts to long to leave now.

I'm determined to stick it out in one of these towns where people are just stuck. These parts are already growing into a very popular tourist attraction, and we could be a great help in keeping the people who are being forced to stay because they have no other place to go. All the towns that have been bustling mining towns are just folding up, with the price of silver going down every time a new discovery is made, they've got to hurry and get as much out as they can while they can still make money at it.

"You know, Buz. I think I could teach you all I know, and when I retire, this job can be yours. It don't have no retirement plan as yet, but I don't need any pension money. I got in on one of the best mines around as a stockholder and sold my shares to one of the rich guys that appreciated what I was trying to do, and when I could see the price start going down, I sold out and invested in a hotel in Reno. That hotel is becoming the most popular place in Reno, so all my dividends have gone into a solid bank and I am going to be a rich man when I sell my holdings in that hotel," stated Sheriff Mahoney, puffing his chest out as he smiled at Buz knowingly.

"Well, Sheriff Mahoney, I think I should maybe buy me one a them casinos thet's jest startin' up and see if Ah can make as good a use of my money as y'all have and make myself a rich man as well. Muh grandpappy left me a really big chunk a money that Ah have had ta move from one bank to another tryin' ta keep it up where I can use it. Now Ah think ya'all have made a thinker outta me, jist standin' here talkin'. Could yuh tell me which bank y'all bin usin'. Then Ah cud feel a bit more safe switchin' muh money to that bank?" Buz replied.

"Sure, Buz, I don't mind telling you which bank I use, because I'm on the board of directors and we can use all the funds we can get to invest in some of the new mines that are being discovered in different spots around the state, and we can use some help keeping it safe from the guys like Butch Cassidy and his bunch. You catch Butch and you suddenly become a big man in these parts. Every time

there's a holdup, somebody claims they've seen Butch or the Kid, so they naturally get blamed for the robbery. In fact, I'd appreciate it if you would take your little caravan up to Pahrump and see if you can quiet things down a bit. There's been a new discovery of gold, and everybody and his brother are looking to grab a piece of land that's got part of the vein so they can share in the wealth that's going to come out of there. It seems as though with your badge and size that you ought ta be able to get yourself a small patch if you've got time to waste digging for what might be there. Be a good idea to try it anyway," said the sheriff.

"Well, thank yuh all, Sheriff. Sounds like that might prove to be interestin' 'nuff fuh me to go take a look. Might be a little action to take care of wahl Ah's lookin'. That'd be worth some help to some poor folks trying to get started, if'n Ah's ta stop some landgrabber from messin' wuth then honest folks trying ta git a good start on livin' the good life. I'll just do that, Sheriff," replied Buz. "Oh, say! There's good roads up to them parts, ain't ther'? Ah wunt like takin' muh horse Goldy and the rest of them that does all the work up into them mountains without a good trail to follow," asked Buz.

"Well, it's just high up all the way, but you take old road number 60 until you come to 372, and then turn left a few miles on 372 so you can ride most of the way on the road and nobody will come along to scare your mounts for miles at a time. It's a nice little town but needs a little law to look after the hardworking folks. I think there's even a hotel by now. So you kin bed yourself down at some place besides with the bugs and snakes," replied the sheriff.

So Buz thanked the sheriff and went back to his little caravan and began packing up for his long hike up the high-altitude road to Pahrump.



## CHAPTER FOUR

**B**uz gladly started out on what was to be a rather arduous trip at high elevation, but he was glad to get away from what was beginning to be a rather boisterous mass of people looking for gold in an area that was rapidly growing into a Mecca for gamblers and crooks. He hated to leave the scene of what could be an exciting adventure for the sheriff and a few deputies that were of questionable loyalty. But then again he could be riding into some problems that he hadn't learned how to handle yet.

Buz left the bustling area around the new town of Las Vegas with a sense of having gotten away from a mess of different problems, one of them being his nagging desire to put coins into those newfangled machines with the spinning wheels and, the newest by far, the poker machines. He had always loved to play poker with the mostly friendly guys that hung around the bars down in his hometown in Texas. It was beginning to seem like he'd been gone for an awful long time and wondered if looking at those poker machines had something to do with his feeling of lonesomeness. He'd soon find out after leaving the Vegas area and start his little caravan up into the higher elevation leading up through the pass to the summit at around eight thousand feet.

At the extreme altitude Buz was slowly riding alongside the still primitive road, only a few cars passed him, and he figured that most of them were tourists on their way to inspect the relatively new



mining claims with the thought of maybe finding room for a claim of their own. He even came upon another horseman headed the slow way to the hopeful thought of a discovery of his own. Buz decided to stop off the road a ways and have a chat with him.

The conversation with the older man, who went by the name of Jim Huber, proved to be very interesting. Buz found out that Jim had also traveled a long way to end up in the Las Vegas area as a result of the rumors of gold being found there, spent a few years working in one of the mines for someone else, never finding a claim of his own, and finally decided to ride over to Pahrump to get work in one of the newer discoveries, because the gold that was supposed to be in Las Vegas was too scarce to support much of a population, and it was beginning to become too filled with gamblers. Some of those gamblers were far too crooked for his likes, and he thought that maybe things would be better for his health in some other place where he could find some of the kind of work he'd learned when he'd been forced to find a way to keep himself fed.

The older man then tried to convince Buz that, unless you were one of the luckier ones, there was no use in going to Pahrump to find gold, because there wasn't the same kind of deposits there that would produce many rich people with mines of their own. So Buz felt the older man was honest enough that he should be honest himself and tell Jim that he wasn't really going there for the gold itself, that he was being sent there by the sheriff to control the crooked element of the growing population that were trying to run others out of their claims, and that he was really a deputy sheriff and was in the area looking for a place to start a ranch and raise some wheat and cattle. He said, "Ah'm not really interested in the gold, Jim. Ah was raised on a big Ranch down in Texas, but muh older brother is going to git thet ranch when muh pa decides to retire, and me and muh brother don't see quite eye ta eye, and Ah didn't want tuh be takin' orders from him for the rest of mah life. Ah'm twenty-one years old and don't even have a girlfriend ta look forward to having a wife and kids so's Ah

kin be a wealthy man like muh pa. Ah don' think Ah'm goin' ta find a place suitable for ranchin' in Pahrump either, but Ah've gotta work and save some money ta git ta the place where Ah kin find a good place to find me a purty girl and some land to start mah ranch."

"How come you rode all this way from Texas to look for a ranch, Buz? That don't sound to me like a smart thing to do. Man as intelligent as you seem to be?" asked old Jim.

"Well, Ah din't know much about the land around the gold mines, and I figured from what I heared about all the folks goin' broke, that Ah could find some of it and get me started while Ah wus lookin' fer some better land durin' thuh winter. Now, Ah've seen it fur mah own eyes and read about what kind of land is around those mines up in Nevada an' Ah jes' give up on goin' the rest of the way up to Reno an' them parts lookin' fer any of thet worthless dirt to even git a start like Ah planned tuh do," answered Buz.

"Well, Buz, I think it would be pleasurable fer me to have a young man as big as you along beside me as I travel these parts. Would that be all right with you? I mean if I could have you for a traveling companion, so's I don't have to use my trusty side arm to belay any strangers that might come along and try to rob me. I'm getting kinda slow with my draw, but I can still shoot straight. You look like you are pretty fast on the draw, and with your badge, I don't think anybody would care to mess around with us. An' I've been on the trail for a good long while jest lookin', so's I feel pretty savvy about the rattlers and bugs around these parts, and I know how to pick a spot to set my bedroll down for the night and not be afraid of getting bit by any bugs or snakes. I jest think I could be a good companion for you to travel with. How about it, Buz?" Jim asked.

"Well, pardner, Ah jis' think that's a terrific idea. Ah been lookin' fer somebody to talk to fer weeks now, an' Ah don' see any problems we cain't take care of 'tween thuh two of us. Mebby I'll lose some of this here accent after talkin' with a straight man like ya'll. Ah don' perticular like to sound like Ah'm from the sticks ya unnerstan'.

Ah think Ah'm purdy intelligent, but I think most people can tell where Ah'm from jist by listenin' to me. Wouldn't you agree to that, pardner?" asked Buz.

"Well, I can sure tell you're from someplace down yonder, but that don't worry me none, Buz. I think we can get along jus' great, an' I also think I can help you with your problem, although I don't think it is so bad around here because there's people from all over this country that have come lookin' to become rich, one way or the other," replied Jim thoughtfully.

So it was that the two riders hitched up and became traveling partners, though not traveling as fast as Buz had been expecting to, but he was surely going to enjoy the company of someone that was experienced and probably knew a little bit about the seeking of gold deposits. And he would have someone to talk to around the campfire at night.

## CHAPTER FIVE

**A**fter riding in such a high altitude, the two traveling companions decided to stop at a convenient, cleared area alongside the road and rest both themselves and the poor horses. Buz unpacked his little tent for when he felt like he had all the information of any importance he could squeeze out of his new companion, and in so doing he got a good deal of info that surprised him, so he felt safe in inviting Jim to share the small space in his tent for the night. Another surprise came to him when Jim refused, saying, "Why thanks, Buz, but I'm a little claustrophobic and I prefer to sleep out in the open."

Among the things Buz found out about Jim was the fact that he had lost his wife to some kind of malady, or he would not be out on the trail looking for peace and a good reason to go on living without his beloved wife, Jenny. But the most important thing he'd been told was the fact that Jim had been the town marshal in Junction City, Kansas, which is just outside of Fort Riley. He'd said he'd had to quit when his wife became ill five years before.

So now Buz has not only a safe partner for the rest of his trip to Pahrump but also someone who could prove to be a mentor for his new deputy assignment. He began to pump Jim for all the information that he could to help him with what was legal and what was not, thereby getting a step closer to knowing what his duties probably should be and when it was legal for him, should a matter come up where he was in doubt, to step in and make an arrest.

At this point Jim said, "Buz, what I consider legal, and what is now actually legal, are two different matters as far as today's laws are concerned, but I will say this, I tried to keep up with the different changes that have taken place while I was too busy trying to care for my dear wife, but I know that I have missed out on some of the changes where I think you'd be safe in using your intelligence to decide whether you were right or wrong and let your sheriff take the blame for having hired a man because of his character rather than for his training and overall knowledge of the law. From what I've heard, he'll back you up, and I'm dead sure you are smart enough to handle any and all problems that come up with no trouble in making the right decisions."

"Wull, thank yuh, Jim. Those are very kind words, and I feel sure now, that Ah'll be in good hands if'n Ah come into somethin' where Ah have to ask your advice. Now we aught to git some rest for the confrontation we'll have to face tomorrow when we pull into the town for the first look at what's what. Ah'll have muh .45 loose in its holster, and jist hope nobody wants to challenge our right ta be there wearin' a badge. An' Ah think it wud be a good idea for you to unlimber thet ten gauge Ah seed you cleanin' last night. Jest might need it," declared Buz.

"Ah shore do hope not, my friend. It makes a pretty sorry mess when I have ta use it, and I've seen a couple times when I have," replied Jim.

Having risen with the sun, they again packed up all their gear and headed for town about five miles up the road, hoping to get themselves a nice steak and egg breakfast before too many people were up and about to cause any trouble for the two strangers. Buz just had a feeling that they weren't going to be welcomed too happily, with him wearing a badge. Jim was of like mind, and when he got off his riding mount, he scrambled over behind one of his pack animals, shotgun ready for whatever.



They had pulled up in front of what appeared to be a decent-looking little cafe right inside the town's apparent boundaries. Buz cautiously mounted the stairs and went in to a rather friendly "Morning, stranger. Looking for some vittles, are you?"

"You bet. Not only that, but some friendly chatter while we enjoy what you have to offer in the way of a steak, a few aigs, fried potatoes, and of course, some toast to mop up whut's left, you think you can handle that twice for me an' muh pardner?" asked Buz as Jim came in the door with the shotgun pointed to his rear.

"Well now, if we're going to have any trouble in the meantime, I can't guarantee that the meal will be as pleasant as normal. If you all will put down your weapons, I'll assure you nothing will happen while you partake of your meal. You see, I am the law in these parts of the hill country, and won't nobody mess around while you're in here," replied the shopkeeper.

"Well then, let's get busy with the meal. My pardner is Jim, and I'm Deputy Sheriff Buz," he said as he stuck out his huge hand for a shake from the town marshall. The marshall stuck out his almost as big a paw as did Buz and grabbed Buz's offering with a smile of acceptance and said, "I sure do welcome some help with the sheriff so busy tendin' ta the wild ones you'll run into, probably before the day's out. I'll warn Miz Simpson down the road a bit to git ya'll a couple of her nice clean rooms down on the second floor for as long as you'll be staying here. Her husband was killed by a couple of roughnecks wantin' ta show how tough they were. She got pretty riled up and come after 'em with her daddy's pump shotgun and got her share of the even status and with the witnesses to back her up, there weren't no need for an arrest, people here just respected her rights in takin' the law in her own hands, and ridding society of two useless buggers, and giving her a rep' for being a woman to mind your manners when she was around.

"Anytime you need help with a gang of tough guys, you jist line yourself up with one of us and I do believe we can handle any trouble

this little town can come up against, and we'll be mighty proud to have the law on our side for a change.

Marshall Hap Ringgold then sent somebody ahead of Buz and Jim, and Miz Simpson was waiting for them standing in front of her reasonably fashionable little hotel. It was what looked like two stories, but the rear part of the hotel was butted up against the hill behind it and turned out to be three stories at the rearmost part of the building.

Miz Simpson greeted them with a friendly smile and said, "With the recommendation of the town's marshall, I believe you two fine-lookin' gennalmen should get the best kind of deal we can offer ya. I serve a decent type meal at 5:00 p.m. every day, and if you're here for the meal, you get it for half price. But I must ask that you say nothing about what you are paying for your lodgings to save the objections of the rest of the clientele. I got to get as much of that generosity back from the visiting people. You got that, Deputy?"

Buz was amazed that she would take the word of the barkeeper and even more amazed at the price she was offering. He just felt that the woman should make some money off the whole transaction. So he said, "Miz Simpson, you just send your bill for the rooms and the meals direct to the sheriff, and he will pay whatever you ask."

"Well, thank you, sir. I will keep that in mind. I don't think there's a person in the whole wide world that would turn down those conditions, but let me be the first, at least for the first couple of days. It's only a good practice to get into with a government customer to make it easier to submit tax reports to account for income and expenses. Thanks again for your kind words and honesty. I certainly do appreciate any person I can feel is honest and won't rob me silly."

## CHAPTER SIX

**A**fter wandering around the little town just checking things out to see what they could see, Sheriff Jim suddenly stopped, and in doing so, he tapped Buz on the shoulder and said, "Be on your toes around here, my friend. There's the fellow who wears the badge I intend for you to have. As you can see, he's using it to get away with beating up on that poor rancher who probably hasn't done anything but question his rights, and that's a big mistake."

"Well, sir, I think I'll just go over there to have a word with the gentleman, and being as you say, that is probably the wrong nomenclature for him. You will back me up won't you?" stated Buz, rather uncertainly.

Surprisingly enough, the sheriff said, "You bet I will. That's what I've been waiting to see. Somebody with enough fortitude to go up against that son-of-a-gun and get that unearned badge of authority he's been in the habit of using to do just what you said. And like I said, I haven't had the nerve to risk my job and the town's good rep. I'll just have my .44 down at my side so if he tries to beat you to the draw, I'll have him in my sights, and I'll drop him if I have to."

"That's what I wanted to hear, Sheriff, but I don't think I'll have to have you do the dirty work this time. I need to have the opportunity to show the townspeople that I have the ability and the experience to do what's necessary. I won't have to do anything but

shoot him in the hand to stop him from being a problem for quite a while and then you come over and arrest him," replied Buz.

The sheriff just nodded his head a little dubiously, drew his .44 out of the holster and cocked it, and held it down by his side as Buz walked over to the illegal deputy saying, "Hold on there, mister. What right have you to be pushing this lady around?"

"Who do you think you are to be questioning me?" he asked.

"Well, sir, I just happen to be the new law around here, and I'll have to ask you to remove that illegal badge you are wearing and hand it over to me nice and easy like so we don't have any trouble," said Buz nice and calmly.

Instead of doing what Buz asked, the illegal deputy did what Buz expected; he reached quickly for his side arm, but just a bit faster, Buz had his .45 in his hand and shot the gun hand of the guilty party, who let out a yelp of pain and dropped the gun. Buz then walked over to him and said, "Now, I'll have the badge, if you please." Since the bad deputy had his right hand nearly shattered by Buz's accurate shot to disarm him, he was having a bit of a difficulty getting his badge off, but Buz had all the time in the world to let his prisoner try and get it off by himself. It mattered not in the slightest that the prisoner was having an agonizing time getting the badge off by himself; it was just another way that Buz was using to make the prisoner realize that he was dealing with someone who knew what he was doing, and because of the rough treatment he had been giving a very nice little lady—an almost unheard of beating for something she had had no part of—and if he could dish it out, then he could certainly be made to suffer a little himself. Buz felt very strongly about that sort of thing happening to people without a shred of evidence against them.

Buz had no prior knowledge of what the town's jail might be like, but he was determined to find some spot, close at hand, where he could confine his prisoner. So he asked Jim if he knew whether the town had a jail and was told that it most certainly had and that it was good that the arrested deputy made good use of it to hold prisoners



without trial. He went on further to say that when he visited the jail here, he found several Chinese laborers that had been beaten, and he was told that the beaten laborers had insisted that they had done nothing wrong.

Hearing what had been done on more than one occasion, Buz decided that he would put his prisoner in one of the cells with some of the women that had been beaten and to leave him there to find out what kind of treatment they would hand out. Since no one had escaped the prison in recent years, Buz felt that there was no problem of that nature; and when his prisoner was put in with the Chinese that he had personally beaten, he would get what was coming to him. The next morning, when he went to check up on how these people had treated him, he found the prisoner was having his breakfast practically served to him. Things had not been handled in the manner to which he had expected at all.

When his senses were back on track, he sought one of the Chinese that could speak English better than he expected and took him to another room that was supposed to be the interrogation room and started to quiz him about the crooked deputy. The man he spoke to was not at all willing to answer questions of the treatment he had received, so Buz had to resort to trickery to get the man to finally tell him what had happened. He promised him that he would be released as soon as the questioning was finished. Then the Chinese said that he could get out anytime he wanted to, but he said, "No can do. Tong say must stay 'til he say all right. Must get enough get debudy. He say Tong take care of him get rid of body, then all prisoner get freed and not have worry about going back to jail again."

"Did I hear you say you could get out anytime you want?" Buz asked in amazement.

"Sure 'nuff, Debudy. Tong on'y use for to get innocent Chinese away from bad guy debudy. Preddy soon no more bad guy debudy. You not have to worry 'bit, he jus' disbere," Wan Chou, the Chinese, stated with no hesitation, so Buz felt sure he knew what he was



talking about, and he was determined to find out how this act of disappearance was going to take place.

About this time, Ranger, Buz's dog, finally caught up with him. For some reason, he'd wandered off hunting for rabbits and Buz never worried about him because he'd been neutered so he wouldn't be messing with any coyotes, and he was so good at tracking his beloved master that he could follow a vehicle if Buz had decided to change from his mount to one of the noisy vehicles that were just becoming more numerous.

Rangy, as Buz referred to him, had arrived at a very opportune time since Buz was determined to find out where this secret escape route was located, and what better means than a dog with the seventh or eighth sense to use in doing his smelling out of a trail. So unbeknownst to the Chinese people in the jail, Buz left to get his dog, Ranger, and positioned himself and Jim, his newfound friend, on two sides of the jail and let Rangy loose to sniff around outside the jail in hopes he would catch a scent that was strange to him and they could investigate. As expected, Rangy found that strange scent and began wagging his tail.

When Buz saw the wagging tail, he uttered a low whistle that Ranger knew was his signal to return to his master. So he loped over to where Buz was hiding and got his treat and pat on the head to let him know he had done a good job, and Buz immediately gave him his treats and grabbed his collar to attach his leash to him so he wouldn't run back to sniff out the person or persons that intended to use that exit spot to get away. Pretty soon an elderly looking Chinese came along and disappeared into the jail. In a very few minutes, the Chinese that had entered remained inside, and the one Buz had talked to appeared wearing the clothes that the entering person had been wearing and quickly disappeared.

The next morning, no one seemed to know the difference, but when the mean guard returned for the morning check, he first started to bat his prisoners around, and the one that had changed places was

singled out for another beating to get him to tell where the secret exit was; the man just pointed in the general direction, and when the guard approached the hidden exit under one of the beds, the man who was supposed to receive the beating quickly stepped up behind him and applied a very effective choke hold around his neck as two more men suddenly appeared and they applied a very effective gag which consisted of a big piece of tape around his nose and mouth so he had a very difficult time trying to breathe, and he was rendered useless, thus enabling the two men to haul him from the cell to the secret exit and away to a given spot along the river front.

When they reached the secluded spot along the river's edge, weights were attached to his body, and he was disposed of by pushing him off the bank of the swift and deep spot alongside of the river they had chosen for the disposal of any of the guards that didn't treat their Chinese prisoners with anything but what the international laws required of them. The Tong active in that area was very strong, wanting mainly to protect the Chinese people who were constantly being arrested simply because they were Chinese.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

**A**s soon as Les had learned about the secret escape hatch available to the mistreated Chinese prisoners who had been arrested mostly to entertain the guards, rather than for any lawful reason, he decided to leave the secret alone for the time being; and the guards would soon leave their prisoners alone and would, hopefully, stop arresting them. The Tong was powerful enough that he seemed to know which ones were guilty as well as the ones that were not. If the law arrested one that was guilty, the Tong would not let them know of the secret escape hatch.

Now Buz had a plan of action: since Ranger could seemingly follow the flight of a fly from one piece of carrion to the next (just a slight exaggeration), Buz had no doubt in his mind that he could locate the exit point. However, Buz's plan was to have Ranger do his part then leash him so he wouldn't give away the fact that he had found the escape hatch. Instead, he wanted to wait for the entrance of the supposed member of the Tong that was active among the Chinese held prisoner in the jail and were waiting for someone to come and free him. Most Tongs were feared by all Chinese that were nonmembers, because they were almost all known for their killing methods among those that were lawbreakers.

There were Tongs that would help out with cases like the one existing in the jail in Pahrump, existing to save a good Chinese wrongly arrested for some crime dreamed up by the guards. One of

those Tongs was active in the saving of those prisoners that were being kept, along with a few drunks and cheaters caught during play at one of the casinos that had sprung up for the entertainment of the miners who had to let off steam that had come to the fore as a result of working below ground in the mines that had sprung up in the area. Pahrump was seemingly out in the middle of nowhere when some prospector found his gold mine then spread the news while in a drunken state, causing the immediate influx of people wanting to strike it rich.

Buz's plan of action was in deep trouble. First because there was very little vegetation in which he could sneak out to and hide for what could turn out to be a very long surveillance. There was plenty of vegetation around the walls of the jail that hid the entrance to the escape hatch, and if one was extremely careful, the hole could be dug over a period of time by digging a little and going out in the desert to dump the dirt that was coming from the area under the jail itself and which was very different in both color and texture than the dirt outside the jail. This was how Buz found out what was going on. He encountered more than one Chinese sneaking out to the pile of supposedly worthless dirt from the digging of the escape hatch. Buz wanted to secretly assay that dirt, because it looked like pretty rich soil.

So Buz did just that, and the first thing the assayer wanted to know was where he had found the soil. Buz told him a little yellow lie, because that is just what the assayer wanted to know. Like Buz, that soil was rich in metallic ores, and the assayer was very conscious of the fact just by looking at it; so instead of pressing the matter any further, he went ahead and did the assay. When he had applied the chemical test to the soil, he reported to Buz his findings and said, "I'd advise you to keep this findings secret, as it's going to make you rich if it is large enough."

Buz then looked at the man and said, "You look and act like an honest man, so I'm going to let you in on something that I don't want spread around. Can you keep this under your hat?"



"Sir, I don't know you from Adam or Eve, but I will tell you a secret in return. I've been doing this for many a prospective millionaire, and I've got secrets you could be that millionaire if I were to tell you what I have kept secret for other men, so I can keep yours as well. What kind of secret do you have for me, sir?" Buz then began to tell him about the hidden escape hatch used by the Chinese Tong that was very active in the town. Before he had finished all of his "secrets," the assayer was nodding his head to let Buz know that he was one of the people that knew of the secret hatch and kept it under his knowledgeable head; and when Buz had finished, he said, "Yeah, I've known about that for quite some time now. Number one, I can't tolerate those rotten jail guards and what they are doing to helpless people who are just here to earn enough money to feed their families. As long as the real crooks they've got in there don't get wind of where it is, the poor China boys can get away from illegal confinement and nobody keeps adequate record to know one Chinese from another, and most all have gotten away and went to other places to do their hard labor, and in some cases very dangerous work."

By the time Buz got a word in edgewise, all he could say was "Sir, I do believe you know more about what's going on than I do, and that's good enough for me." Then he added as an afterthought, "I was thinking about starting an organization to help these poor China boys put away as much of what they are earning as possible so they can go back to China or Formosa and have a little to live on when they get back home if they even want to go back. Otherwise, they can start their own business in San Francisco's Chinatown where I hear they've set up a community of their own people."

"Would you be willing to head up an organization like that?" asked the assayer. "You being one of the sheriff's more trusted employees, I don't think there would be much trouble with you handling the money."

"Well, I think you're right about the money-handling part, but they haven't seen me in any kind of gun play yet, so I don't know if



they can trust me to handle robberies yet. That's not a problem for me, but nobody here knows that yet, 'ceptin you," answered Buz.

"Well, it won't take me, and those two yokels that tried to rob you, long to spread the word about how you can handle yourself with two guys on you, so what do you think? Do you want to give it a try?"

"If I have your help, yes, I most certainly do," answered Buz. "And I'm pretty sure the sheriff would like to be in on it also, as he was the one that set me to investigating what was going on here, since he was too busy finding out what was going on in the rest of the county. I will have to let him know because I don't want to get fired because he thinks I'm wasting my time when I'm too busy to be arresting guilty parties," stated Buz.

"Speaking of being too busy," added Buz, "I don't suppose you know any good-looking girls that are not in the evening entertainment business, do you? I'm to the horny age and my pappy told me that if any woman found out that I have a small fortune that I keep adding to, they'd be all over me and not because I'm such a good-looking cow poke but that they'd be after every penny I had, so I've stayed away from most girls I don't know. And speaking of I don't know, you haven't told me your name yet and I'd be very pleased to meet you formally, sir."

"The feeling is mutual, my friend. Finding an honest man, around these parts, anyway, is a rarity. You can get my attention most anytime by just raising your voice and saying 'Les' and most anybody can tell you where I am during the day, and if you can't find me that way, I'll be upstairs sleeping."

"Being the deputy sheriff, there will come a few times that I won't be in town, but when I am and you need me you can holler Buz cuz muh name is Buster and I don't like to be called by my given name, just Buz will get me if I'm in hollering distance. Otherwise my dog will fetch me if you are nice to him and give him something nice to eat every once in a while and you'll find him pretty intelligent. He'll find me wherever I might be, because I've told him to watch

things for me and he'll come fetch me. And he doesn't waste any time doing it."

"I'll surely remember that Buster," said Les, pulling Buz's leg a little having just been told that Buz didn't particularly like being called Buster.

Buz came back at him in a friendly way, saying, "What's that you said, Lester?"

"Jest a little jest for the day, Buz," answered Les.

"No fun going all day without pulling somebody's leg at some time in a long hard day, my friend. And I'll remember to watch what I tell you in the future. I've already got one leg longer than the other and it makes for tough walking. I've got some investigating to do now, see you later, my friend, and be sure to remember what I said about pretty Chinese girls, OK?"

"Will do, Buz. I've got a lonely one I'll introduce you to if I can find her. Most beautiful Oriental girl I've ever seen. Name's Betty."

## CHAPTER EIGHT

**T**he sheriff took Buz very seriously and did go out looking for his Chinese friend Betty who had come to the U.S. at a time when there were quite a few Chinese being accepted for work in and around the mines that had begun to pop up all over the Western United States, leaving out the States of Washington and Oregon. He found Betty in a new restaurant that had opened specifically for the remaining Chinese populace after the gold mines began closing down and the state of Montana, which had become known for its very profitable copper mines, was almost on the verge of closing down its mine and smelters. The city of Butte, where the richest deposits of copper were to be found, was going from a population of thirty thousand to an almost bare city of ten thousand. Their copper was now being produced by a chemical process of changing the very acidic hole of over a thousand feet deep to a tourist attraction of which nobody had expected to be able to support all the former miners, some of whom were dying off from the chemical-laden air they'd been forced to breath.

Now, Buz was more interested in what was taking place in the state of Nevada. There had been a strike of gold found in Pahrump, and when that had run out, silver had become a very rich substitute, but it was mostly in a chemical form and had to be treated with chemicals before the actual silver product was formed. Pahrump had been on the end of the Comstock Lode, and when its silver ore

ran out, the remaining soil was found to be rich in other valuable minerals, so it became a small town with a big production of vital ores. But again, Buz was not happy with this area for use as a ranch and was forced to rely on his deputy sheriff's badge for his meager wages, and his hopes for a satisfactory girl were dashed until his new friend introduced him to Betty when he took him to the new Chinese restaurant.

Buz was so struck with the beauty of the girl that he began spending so much time there that Betty began to notice him. Having no parents to make decisions for her, she began to take as much of her time waiting on him as she did on any of the other people that came into the very nice Chinese restaurant. Finally, he could stand it no longer, and wanting to find out where she lived and what she did when not working, he asked if the owner of the restaurant was available for him to speak to. The Chinese lady that did the greeting of customers knew of Buz's interest in Betty, and she was not a bit hesitant to have him meet the owner, who happened to be her husband; so she went upstairs to the living quarters of the restaurant and told him there was a deputy sheriff that wished to speak with him. As he was not too busy at the moment, he said, "Bring the gentleman here to speak with me. I will judge him to see how good a person the man is."

The owner's wife then went back downstairs to the restaurant area, found Buz talking to one of the waitresses other than Betty, and told him to go up the stairs to the residential area of the rather large building and he would find the owner in his office.

So Buz went up the stairs as he had been told and found the owner busy at work on the accounts of the restaurant. He knocked on the door frame, and the owner looked up and said, "Enter, please, Deputy. I would be pleased to hear what it is that you wish to speak to me about."

"Thank you for giving of your time to me, sir. Ah'm amazed at your command of English, sir. How is that possible if you have just

come here, and you are doing your own books. That is another point in your favor. You must be very intelligent, but I am not here on official business. I am a lonely man having traveled a great many miles from the great state of Texas to find two things. The first I have decided I've made a bad mistake about. That is the availability of land in this state for the starting of my own ranch. The second point I wish to discuss with you is one of your waitresses. The one they call Betty. She is a very beautiful girl, and although she is Chinese, she is just what I am looking for in a wife to live with me and raise children I can be proud of. I come to you to ask permission to date her. With you to introduce me to her, I'm sure she would not be afraid of me as one who is seeking to just bed down with her, as I'm sure a lot of men have tried and maybe succeeded, which I would guess you would not knowingly consent to.

"I believe if I told you a little about myself, you could judge what kind of man I am. Would that take up too much of your time?"

"Not at all, Deputy. I think I have a very accurate assessment of your character, but I would be interested in knowing more before I offer to help you. Please go ahead, and if you don't take too much time, I can always work later on my accounts. I will tell you later why it is important to me to learn more about you. So go ahead and I will listen to you and stop you when I have heard enough," announced the elderly gentleman, who seemed sincerely interested in what Buz had to say.

Buz began by adding the fact that he had traveled all this way by horseback with four of his own horses. Then he told of seeing how desolate some of the land around Reno had seemed and of meeting a former sheriff along the way that had befriended him and told him a little about the area. Then when he had started to tell of his deflated desire to go as far as Gold Hill, the owner stopped his tale of woe and said, "I believe I have heard enough about your futile efforts to find some good land to start a ranch of your own. But I would like to know why you are interested in Betty. You have said nothing about



why you are a grown man and have no woman yet. Why is that, sir?" asked the owner.

"I left a very small town down in Texas because the only girls that were half as pretty as Betty, were all after a man who had money to spend on them. I never told anybody that mah granddaddy left me a small fortune, because I didn't want to fall for one of those money grabbers. When I spend money on a girl, I want it to be because I thought it would be something nice for the girl and she would be thankful and happy for the gift I gave her. So you see, I can be stingy with my money if I think it might not be appreciated," answered Buz. "Good answer, sir," replied the owner. "Now I will tell you a few things I'm sure you'll like to hear. First of all, I have come here to be of service to the miners and basically the Chinese workers who need all kinds of help and advice. I was a professor at a university in New York where I taught English to basically Chinese who wished to become citizens of the U.S. I was also studying law in my free time. But to get to the the thing I wanted to tell you. I have a ranch here in this state, but I don't have the time to run it and the restaurant both. I will introduce you to my niece who is under my care because she has no other family, and I do that with full confidence that you will be good to and for her. She also speaks good English and is intelligent, and after you have married her if that is your intention, I will sell my ranch to you at bottom value after you have shown an intense desire to make a good ranch better. Would that meet your approval, sir? By the way, you haven't made any effort to tell me your name, is there a reason for that?"

"There was and is a reason why I haven't told you my name, which is Buster Hagen, but I prefer to be addressed as Buz. The reason I am so reluctant to tell people my name is because I don't want them to be calling around to find out information about me. I have already told you that so there is no reason for me to be so private with you and I appreciate the offer but I would like to know where it is and what it is like. I still have a part of my adventure to complete yet but I would like to get started with Betty first, she may not want

a paleface for a husband, and I'll have to take it easy with her until I know how she feels. I'm sure you can understand that," replied Buz.

"Of course. But let's not waste any more of your time and mine, and go meet my niece, Betty," he said.

So he rose from his plush chair and put out his hand and said, "My name is Chen Wang Du, you may call me Wang, or Du when we get to know one another better."

Buz felt the firmness of the man's grip and knew he had a new friend in Pahrump. That friend was about to introduce him to the girl he had been very impressed with, both her beauty and her gentleness. He was just leading him back down to the restaurant area to find his niece Betty who was busy as a bee trying to fill more than its share of the honeycomb.

When the owner of the place you are working stops you and says, "Come with me, Betty. I have a man that I think you will like, that wants to meet you. He is a deputy sheriff, but has no uniform to scare you with. He told me he came all the way up from Texas to find a girl like you, and I tell you I believe his every word, because I think he is very honest. He is also very big, but don't let that scare you."

Betty listened with a smile growing on her face. She had not failed to notice how often the big man had come in to eat there. So she said, "Yes, Uncle Du, I think I know the man you are telling me about, for I have had occasion to serve him, and I agree that he seems honest, and he treats me very politely, and you are right. I think I would like to get to know him, so I will gladly ignore my other customers for just a short time to follow you," she remarked, seeming to be impatient to meet one of her favorite customers.

The two of them walked over to his table, and he rose as they neared him and smiled at Betty. As Wang and Betty, who was known as Su Mei, approached Buz, his smile grew to make the people around them wonder what was going on. Buz had not thought it necessary to go buy any fancy duds when he was not sure he was going to need to look his best.

Wang made quite a formal introduction, and Buz could tell he was very proud of his niece. He said, "Buz, I'd like you to meet my niece, Su Mei. Su Mei, this is Mr. Buster Hagen. He is one of the sheriff's deputies, and he has asked me to introduce you to him so he might get to know you better with my permission, which I have gladly given him, after checking him out to see that he is not after you for the wrong reasons. He has told me that he has been lonely for someone like you and has never had a girlfriend before."

Su Mei made a little curtsy then put out her hand and said, "I'm very pleased and proud to meet you, Mr. Hagen. My uncle has given his approval for me to sit with you for a short time before I must get back to serving my customers." She didn't get to finish talking about going back to work before Wang broke in and said, "No need to get back to serving customers, Su Mei. You stay with Buz as long as he wants you for company. I know he has many things he wishes to tell you, and he is my guest for whatever he would like from the menu."

Buz was really surprised to find a real Chinese with the politeness to invite him to be his guest, and he again thanked him for the honor of Su Mei's company. Wang bowed and said, "It is my pleasure to have someone I can trust to look after my niece." Then he smiled at Su Mei and walked away toward the stairs to his office and back to working on his accounts.

Buz was thrilled at the opportunity to sit and talk with Su Mei, and he felt she was also pleased with the freedom to take time off from her work to talk with a perfect stranger. He said the first thing that came to his mind, "Su Mei, I am so pleased to have you visit with me. I must confess that I am not accustomed to talking with pretty girls, and I probably will stumble a bit trying to keep being polite, but my daddy told me that if I wanted to have a nice girl's company, I must always act politely and let the girl do the talking as much as possible. So how long have you been here in the USA?"

## CHAPTER NINE

**B**uz was so enraptured with the company of Betty, or Su Mei as he had been introduced to her, that he almost forgot that he had his favorite meal cooked specially for him; and when another comely looking girl brought him his food, he was embarrassed that he was going to be eating in front of her with nothing for her to eat. He was about to say something when the other waitress said something in Chinese that he didn't recognize. Buz had taken a course in Chinese simply because none of his friends or family could believe he was smart enough to learn such a tough language. The girls were probably speaking in Cantonese.

After a few quick words in their dialect, Buz spoke the Chinese for "I don't understand," and Betty very quickly turned to him with a very red face and said, "Oh, I'm sorry, Buster. That was rude of me," and she looked at the other waitress, and they both started to giggle, and Betty's face grew redder and redder until finally she turned away from Buz and evidently got herself under control. Then she turned back to him and said, "We talk of you, Mr. Hagen, and the many times you come in and sit watching me. Sometime I look back at you when you not looking. Terry my good friend and she know I have interest in you. So now, I can be with you, if you like, and we can go to other places away from Pahrump where nothing good happens. I like much to dance. You like?" she asked with a rather hopeful look on her face.



Buz was a little embarrassed when he answered her, saying, "I think I would if you can teach me, I did not care to spend the time dancing with girls I didn't care for when I had many things to do on my father's ranch. So I never learned to dance. Can you teach me?" he answered.

"Oh. Is easy. I can teach, then we have place in next town where my uncle take me. He like to dance much as I. He dance with me for little while, then he has to dance with my aunt or she get mad. I have two, three men who always want to dance with me, so I never alone. When you like to go, Mr. Hagen?" she answered. Again she looked excited at the opportunity.

"Not at all unless you call me Buz as all my friends do. If you begin to treat me as a very good and honest man, I will ask you to go with me tomorrow, if you don't have to work," Buz replied with a questioning look on his face.

"Oh, Buz. I so very happy to call you Buz as if you my only friend. Uncle Wang tell me he be proud for me to have nice man for friend, and he say, 'Go with him if he asks. We not too busy this week.' So he not mind I don't work when not too busy."

"Jen hau," he said, hoping to get to speak more in her own language; with all the Chinese around, he wanted to be able to understand at least the ones that understood the national dialect. It would be very useful being a deputy sheriff that understood the language of most of the ones that were apt to cause trouble in order to get something to eat; and some of the criminals that caused trouble were doing what they did simply because they were poor, without jobs, and had no other way to feed their families.

Buz had a very sincere concern for these people, some of whom were brought to this country with the expectation of having jobs only to have the mines shut down because of one reason or another.

Betty was not only a very beautiful girl, but she was clean, educated (from all Buz could tell), and probably knew quite a few of the local population. How much easier it was going to be to get in



with influential people among the Chinese that had not been forced to leave town for better jobs. Some had saved money and paid their way back to China while others had gone to San Francisco and helped found that very large and popular city.

"Oh, Buz. I so glad you speak language of my people and have interest in their lives. Most people I know speak two or more dialects because they be educated, but must speak language of nation that teaches them. It is what you say is 'Is Rule,' so they want to learn, must know dialect of China government. You understand?" Su Mei replied happily.

"Sure, Su Mei, you speak very clearly. I think I can teach you our language so you not miss my words to you. Pretty soon I will speak words that have many meanings and are treated incorrectly by your people, and I don't want that to happen to us."

By the time the evening was over, Buz felt as if he had walked twenty miles, but he had done so quite a few times before arriving at this quiet little town next to Pahrump. He'd had a marvelous meal in the clean, well-served little Chinese restaurant in a town he'd never even heard of before. Su Mei had said that it was not frequented by very many white American people simply because of the attitude of white people who didn't know much about the core people of China after seeing so many of them working in the mines or farms and living in whatever they could find to build a home with. After the very filling and delicious meal, Su Mei had taken him to an old abandoned barn that had been cleaned up with Lysol then painted in various colors that had made the whole area seem cheerful. There was a record player that had very good volume for the dancers that came to enjoy themselves.

It was really the teaching method used by Su Mei that exhausted him so completely. The first time he attempted to dance, she held him away from her so he could watch her feet and learn the steps. Then for the second dance, she moved in close and placed his hands around her in the manner she wanted for the dancing to continue. His right

hand was placed just above her wonderfully curved posterior, and the material of the dress she was wearing was silky soft; she was wearing a very pretty and slitted-up-to-the-top-of-her-thighs *jyang sam*, the typical dress for most any occasion that the Chinese woman wore for most every fashionable occasion.

As he got better at following her steps, his hand got farther around her and more on the top of that marvelously rounded swell of her posterior, and her arm came around his neck holding him closer and closer. It was only natural that his loins became more and more excited and added to the feeling of wanting to lie down and rest before he did something he would be very embarrassed about. Just as he was about to ask her if they could go outside where it was cooler and he could return his vitals to a more relaxed position, she pressed her lips against his neck, kissed him, then leaned back a little so she could see his flushed face and said, "I think you like me and dancing, Buz. Am I correct thinking that way?"

"I think after I get to know you a little better, I am going to talk to your uncle Wang about you and ask him if I may take you from him and marry you. I guess that would mean you are very correct," he replied with that shy smile she liked so much. Then he said, "I hope you don't mind, Su Mei, but I think we had better ride back to my campsite and then walk you back to your rooms. This dancing is so different than I thought it would be and I am near exhaustion. Do you mind?"

"No. I not mind. I think of new Chinese name for you, I wish to call you Di from now on. That be my private name for you, and we can sit and talk for while more, OK? I promise not to touch you if you just want to rest from the problem of dancing with me."

"When we get back to your rooms, you can touch me all you want, my Su Mei. But something may happen that should be after we are married."

"My Di, in China, is not unusual for that to happen between two young people who feel the same way about each other, and dance with

you tell me what I want to know and I want you to do what you wish to happen and not to feel bad. It say we are married without special man to tell us we are now one together. Not need to talk to Uncle Wang. Next time you see him, just call him Du, then he know you part of family now. You like?"

At that point, there was nothing he could do or say but take her in his arms and kiss her as passionately as he knew how, then he looked into her beautiful dark eyes and said, "My love for you is growing more intense by the minute now, my Su Mei."

"Now I sure you are man I look for to keep me in U.S., Di. I look for long time, for right man. Man who treat me like I his only woman and not one to exper'ment with until he find one good nuff one to take for make love to. You make me feel very good, Di. Make me feel like we already married, you like?"

"Uuummm, I like very much. Now I don't want you to come with me to where I sleep. It is not the right place for one so beautiful to go on her wedding night. I will take you back to Du's place and see if he is still proud of you after we sleep together. That is what you have said to me, yes?" he inquired

"Exactly true, my Di. I not want you to have embarrassment right here," she said with her gorgeous smile, looking him right square in the eyes.

So he carefully helped her mount Goldy, then mounted the other horse, and they started back to Mr. Chen's Hotel where he smiled as Buz asked for a room and said, "Su Mei already has a very nice room with a very comfortable bed. You could stay there and I wouldn't have to charge you, OK?"

"Oh! That would be very kind of you, Du," answered Buz.

With a big smile on her face, Su Mei took his hand and led him up to her room.

## CHAPTER TEN

**W**hen they got back to Buz's campsite, he didn't want to make love to Su Mei on the hard ground, so he decided to grab his backpack and go to the best of the motels and rent a room there. It was just a little place with about twelve rooms, so Buz asked if the last one on the end was available. He said he wanted to have his horses as near to him as possible. The person at the desk told him that the end room was vacant and that there was still a stable behind the building where he could put his whole team of horses as nobody was using them much anymore.

So Buz rented the end room, took Su Mei and the horses down to the end of the building, and found an old ramshackle building that was remarkably clean on the inside. He led his horses inside, then showed Su Mei how he led the horses to some fairly good-conditioned stalls, then put them in stalls. Finding fodder for his small string was a little difficult, but he found some fairly good grass that he chopped loose and finally had enough cut with Su Mei to help gather it, and the two of them had some fun taking it in to the horses, then Buz started to throw some of it at Su Mei, and she laughed and grabbed some and came at him with a handful of what he had thrown at her and tried to shove it into his shirt front and down his neck. They were soon rolling around on the nice, fresh-smelling grass, wrestling around like a couple of little kids.



That kind of play was new to Su Mei due to her upbringing, but when Buz finally had her in his arms, the laughing and clowning around suddenly stopped as Su Mei found Buz's neck with her lips. After kissing him, she said, "We go into room now, my Di. Other people see us and wonder what is happen. I see woman looking out window in building across from us. She might think wrong about you and call manager. I like this kind of play, but we get serious pretty quick, so it best we do on bed in room, you like?"

Buz looked in her eyes and could see the want, so he said, "I not only like, Su Mei, I love."

This time, still with the same look in her eyes, she kissed him full on the mouth. Short as the kiss was, it had the effect of raising Buz's manhood to reach its full hardness, so he grabbed her and carried her to the door of the rented room. While still holding her in his arms, he reached down and found the doorknob, opened the door, and carried her in and put her on the bed, closed the door, and came back and jumped on the bed and grabbed her, but not with the intent of playing around. He knew she meant what she had implied out on the plush grass, and he pulled her to him, finding her lips open a bit and waiting for him to kiss her again. This time he knew she felt the hardness of his erection, and she pressed her tongue between his lips and began searching the entire inside of his mouth. He had only once felt another girl's tongue in his mouth, and that was the girl he knew was only after his money, and the passion of her kisses had no meaning to him or, he thought, to her either. Su Mei's kiss was only passion and desire, and her rubbing herself against his *huge* hard erection was telling him she wanted whatever he could give her.

Buz was a bit inexperienced at making love to any girl, but Su Mei seemed to know what lovemaking was all about, and she was now trying to get his pants undone. When he took over that task, she began unbuttoning his shirt. As she got the last button undone, he sat up with her as she pulled the shirt off and reached for the bottom of his T-shirt and pulled it up and over his head. As she got



that done, she began kissing his muscular shoulders and chest while he frantically tried to find the talon of the zipper on the back of her Chinese dress. Finally he found it and unzipped it to reveal the slenderness of a back with no bra strap to worry about undoing, so he just pulled the dress down to her waist. As he did so, he revealed her small, firm breasts with the nipples thrusting straight out at him. He being so tall, she had a time getting his head pulled to her breasts. He solved that by lifting her off him and rolling her onto her back, then he found one breast and took the nipple into his mouth and began kissing first one then the other, then starting over. This time he used his tongue to circle the nipples. As he began this, he began to hear, "My Di, my love, please," repeated over and over. As he was more than ready himself, he put his hands under her slender behind and lifted her slightly and began to enter her widespread legs. She was really quite moist, but Buz was so big he had to thrust extra hard to enter, and he almost stopped because she was groaning loud enough he was afraid the neighbors would hear. When he stopped, she said, "My Di, don't stop now. It hurts for first time, I not die. I just have to get used to you, my love. Please don't stop, I be all right after you break seal. All woman have to do this. I be all right, I need you to finish me, so next time we both make joyful love together."

"All right, sweetheart, I don't want to hurt you, but if you say all right, I am happy to be this kind of servant to you." Then he began to thrust harder, and he began to feel something give under one harder thrust, and she almost screamed the yell she gave when her hymen broke. Then she wrapped her arms tightly about him and said, "Now you be mine, my Di. I love you so much now we married in sight of Chinese gods."

"Su Mei, I was yours as soon as you looked at me. We will never be apart. I will always love you," said Buz.

"My Di, I so sorry I make such noise, but it hurt almost too much. Are you ready for do it again. I need you when it not hurt so much, please?" she asked.

"The second you kiss me, I will be ready, sweetheart," answered Buz.

So Su Mei began the act of lovemaking for the first time that she would not be in so much pain, and she kissed Buz with all the love she felt for him; and as he had said, the kiss was all it took for him to rise up and be a man, but he felt there must be another way, from all he had heard at the police academy where he had taken his training while still a senior in high school. He'd had to beg his way into the training, because he was still a student and under the normal age for such training. The final decision was made because of his immense size and a combination of high grades and intense interest in doing something about the sudden growth of crime in the cities.

Buz and his Su Mei made love constantly for a couple of hours until they were both exhausted, and Su Mei said, "My Di, we make love enough now. I am hurt too much for first time, we can go to sleep together and I take you to my bed when we get back tomorrow. Is OK with you, my love?"

"Oh, yes, sweetheart. I am also hurting a bit, from trying to satisfy you, and I am quite ready to hold you in my arms and try to sleep. We'll see how tired I am as soon as I kiss you good night," Buz answered.

As he kissed her good night, the kiss was still passionate enough that he could feel the stirring of his sore manhood, but his want was still such that he had to turn his face away from hers and tried to go to sleep, as did she.

After a few more minutes of breathing hard, Buz finally heard her breath slowing, and she feel asleep. When he was sure she was asleep, at last he turned his head back so he could look at her beautiful, slender body and kiss each breast one more time and, again, try to reach dreamland.

In the morning, when Buz awoke, he noticed the time; discovering that it was near checkout time, he was forced to awaken Su Mei so they wouldn't have to pay for another night. When he kissed her to

awaken her, she turned to look at him and said, "Oh, my Di. You want me again? I think I'm ready?"

Buz smiled and answered her with a painful look on his face and said, "Yes, sweetheart, but we have to take showers and get ready to leave. It is late, almost time for lunch, and we have to check out or pay for another day. Uncle Wang will worry about you." He finally convinced her to get out of bed and took her by the hand and led her to the tiny shower and turned the water on, adjusting it so she wouldn't feel too hot, and he said, "You first, sweetheart. I don't want to make love to you in this tiny little shower."

So they both got showered and got out just in time to beat the checkout time. Then the owner said, "I am happy to have had you two young ones stay in my humble spot. You didn't need to hurry to get out. That checkout notice is just for the rich ones who decide to sleep in late and not worry about having to pay. I was very happy to have you. Please come back and see me again."

Buz just looked at Su Mei and said, "I'm sorry, sweetheart."

Su Mei kind of blushed and, smiling back at him, said, "Is not problem, my Di, we hurry back home, after we have big meal in nice little restaurant, and see what Uncle Wang say."

So Buz paid the bill, and they mounted the horses for the ride over to the restaurant where they had dinner the day before, and Buz ordered his favorite breakfast meal of steak and eggs with hash browns, toast, and a glass of orange juice. When he'd asked Su Mei if she wanted to have what he had, she said in horror, "My Di, you have to carry me back home, I eat that much. How you stand it in morning meal?"

"Sweetheart, I have to get my strength back for the long ride back to your uncle Wang's place," he answered.

After putting away most of that huge breakfast meal, Su Mei had insisted she wanted to try a bite of his steak, then a portion of his hash browns, which she said she had never tried before, then she had urged him to cut off a piece of his steak and slice it up into bites for her.

She obviously was enjoying his meal as much as he was, and the steak was big enough for two people in the first place, so Buz didn't mind sharing a little of his rather than order another and have too much.

After that filling-up breakfast, Su Mei was very contented and anxious to get started back to her home at her uncle Wang's place of business. Buz knew what her rush was: she evidently felt the need to tell her uncle that she was now married in the physical way and wanted to get the actual marriage planned and over with. He felt that was OK with him, and he was anxious to get back to her uncle's so she could make her proud announcement. Once that was taken care of, he wanted to get back to Pahrump and start work.

Betty (Su Mei), to Buz, seems eager to learn what things he is accustomed to doing, including the taking down of the tent in which she had her first experience at the joyful act of love she had witnessed in that tent. Buz was very glad to teach her how things were done on a camping trip, and it didn't slow him down from the trip back to Pahrump.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

**A**fter they got done taking down the tent, rolling up the sleeping bags, and packing everything on the backs of the two horses Buz had ridden to Pahrump, they were ready for the short trip back to Pahrump. Buz decided that they could make better time as Su Mei had become quite quickly a good horse person and was able to follow him along without complaining one iota about the pounding her posterior was taking. Regardless of how well she was doing, about halfway back, he decided there was no real hurry; but the horses were getting sweaty from the loads they were carrying, and he figured they should be given a rest. So he held up his hand and signaled Betty to pull over and get down for a short rest.

When this happened, Betty wondered why he was stopping, so Buz told her he knew the female anatomy pretty well now and he knew that, after their passionate lovemaking for a good part of the night, it must have made her sore, and the saddle was not kind to anyone's crotch, including his.

In answer to his concern, she said, "Oh, Buz, you so thoughtful to me, but I'm all right. You teach me how to ride good, and I more tired in legs. We stop for you for few minutes then go on. If you come kiss me, I feel much better and want to get home to tell Uncle Wang Du what happen to us, OK?"

"OK, if you're sure you want to hurry on, sweetheart," said Buz. And Buz started to walk over to some rocks that provided some



shelter from the late afternoon sun when Su Mei put her hands on her lovely hips and stomped her foot on the hard ground, and when Buz turned around to look at her, she said, "You say OK to me, but you walk away and forget what I say."

Buz looked a little chagrined and answered her with "What did I forget, my little Su Mei?"

She immediately replied, "You try to tease me again? I say you come kiss me and I feel better. Now you make me feel worse."

Buz quickly replied with his best excuse for forgetting that little matter by saying, "Sweetheart, you should know what happens to me every time I so much as touch you, and that would make me very uncomfortable when I get back on my horse, but I'll suffer just for you," and he walked over to her and leaned down to give her a little quick kiss. Before he could get away, she grabbed him around the neck and gave him a real kiss, turned away and walked over to Goldy, and said, "I'm ready to go if you are, my Di."

The kiss was, though quite passionate, administered so fast that Buz only started to feel his usual reaction to it, and he said, "If you're ready, so am I, Su. Let's go."

Buz thought all the way that the demand for a kiss out in the open desert, alongside the roadway, being as uncomfortable as she must have been, was proof positive that she loved her loss of her maiden status and wanted more. He was to find out for sure after she had told Mr. Chen what had transpired over the past day.

In fact, when they finally arrived at her uncle's place of business, for some reason he was sitting downstairs waiting for them. Evidently one of the few people who had passed them along the way had told Mr. Chen that they had been seen riding back to Pahrump. Pahrump, by the way, was one of the victims of the gold fever that had brought thousands of people to the Nevada gold and silver strikes, but the gold and silver weren't the only minerals that were in the general area; and Pahrump was now producing other valuable minerals, so not all the people who had come for the gold or silver

had left since there were still jobs for some of the miners and the town was a great place to set up museums.

To make a long story shorter, Mr. Chen greeted them by saying, "I'm sure glad to see you two, but I'm a little worried about why you were gone for so long. Do you, in fact, have something to tell me that will make me happy I put you two together?"

"Yes, Uncle Du. It make me very happy to tell you that, In eyes of gods, we are now two people become one together. I so happy you put my Di in family business so I can see more often. We very much love each other, and both very happy," answered Su Mei.

"Ah hah. Now I can quit worrying about what I promised my very well loved sister I would do for my also well-loved niece. I will make all the arrangements for your wedding to take place here in my place of business as soon as I can get my friend the minister to come to perform the business of legal wedding. I will make sure there are flowers to place around the room after I close restaurant for business, and put tables away in my warehouse and make my own church with chairs for pews. Then invitations will be sent to all my friends and yours."

At this point, Su Mei said, "Many thanks, Uncle Du. That is very kind of you. My Di and I need to rest from our long journey on back of his horses. Now no need for extra room for Di. He will use my room if you not mind?"

"No, silly woman. Why make maids clean one more room? I know you would just be in one or the other of your two rooms making very happy love together not resting as you said," replied Uncle Chen with a smile on his face. "You two go and rest, as you said before, thinking your poor uncle was stupid or something. I will call you when time for eating comes."

So Su Mei grabbed Buz by the hand and started up the stairway to the second floor where Betty's room was located. When she got there and opened the door, she let out a surprised sound saying, "Wha, what has happened to my room?" When Buz followed her in,

he could see that all the furniture and every item of Betty's collection of knickknacks were gone. Just then, one of the maids had come up behind them and simply said, "This way, Su Mei. Your uncle has given you more room. We go to suites upstairs."

The maid proceeded to head for the stairway again and went upstairs to the richer floor without waiting for the two of them. Su Mei and Buz were so confused they just stood there watching the maid go up to the fourth floor. When the maid finally realized that they were not following her, she turned around and said, simply, "Come, come. I show you new room."

So finally Buz took Betty's hand and started up the winding stairway to the plush suites Mr. Chen reserved for his high-roller poker players who appreciated the privacy those rooms offered. Lily, the head maid, was already up to the fourth floor waiting with a big smile for them to catch up to her.

When the two of them finally caught up to Lily, Betty said, "Why you so happy, smile so much like never I see you smile?"

Lily just looked at Buz and answered, "I so happy for you, get such a big man who look at you like he really love you. You so lucky to have rich uncle to take care of you. I very proud to work for him. He not like other boss. He treat all of us like he think we part of family. I work here long time and know he worry you fall for some man who talk fast, make false promise to get you in bed with him."

"Oh, Lily. You should know me well enough to know I not want that kind of man. I just look at my Di, and I know right away that he not like other men. Now, you can show us the room you so proud of. Come Di. I excited to see what this room is like. You be excited also, my Di?"

"Very much so, my Su Mei." He looked again at the long hall leading to their rooms and finally got the idea of how big this place really was. Their rooms were down at the far end of the long hall, and Lily had to take the key out of a pocket in the smock she was wearing. He also got a much closer look at her and discovered that she was a

very pretty older girl. Probably in her thirties. He began to wonder if she was something special to Mr. Chen.

Lily got the door open finally and said, "Now you can get the rest you were trying to fool Wang Du with. He pretty smart." With that, she waved her arm to indicate entrance to the room and then said, very much delighted with her chore, "Pretty big, eh. Su?" and turned and walked off down the long hall.

## CHAPTER TWELVE

**W**hen Buz and Betty walked into the room with its extra wide size, like the front door of some mansion or other, they were both amazed at what Betty's uncle Du had done for them. The room they entered was just a sitting room or library, complete with an old-fashioned desk and shelves covering one whole wall behind a plush leather-covered love seat. The shelves were loaded with books covering everything Buz might want to investigate. Books that were to cover every facet of crime that he might encounter. Not only books on law but adventure, romance, hunting, horseback riding, fishing, and guns. He was amazed at Mr. Chen's knowledge of what things he was interested in.

But the library wasn't all that was the cause of their amazement. They were directed through another wide door. That room was a magnificent example of a storybook bedroom. It was complete with a huge king-sized bed with a canopy over it, silk sheets, and pillow cases. Plus it had two bathrooms with walk-in showers. Another door led to the last room of the huge suite. It was very picturesque, long wide window overlooking what most people would be uninterested in, the vast beautiful desert artfully colored in almost red soil and mounds of different colored sands. Sitting before this panorama was the biggest davenport Buz had ever seen. It was actually two sectional ends of another two sets of davenport that were positioned



in two different areas of the room, each of which had a huge coffee table sitting in front of it.

On each side of the huge window, there was a beautiful painting of a section of the desert where there was an oasis with verdant growths of trees and a background of varicolored sandstone cliffs. All throughout the room were different paintings that showed the various colored scenes of spots out in the desolate parts of the desert and some spots along the Colorado River, like the one at Bullhead City and Laughlin where there is now a nice resort and casinos at riverside.

As Buz stood there practically with his mouth open, taking in the beauty of what Su Mei's uncle Du had given them for their use during the wait for their legal wedding ceremony, Su Mei took his hand and said, "We go and rest now, my Di?"

Buz didn't answer verbally; he just smiled and nodded his head as she pulled him away from the beauty of what they would have for their pleasure as long as they wanted. As soon as they reentered their huge bedroom, Buz could think of only two things he wanted. As his Su flopped down on the huge bed, she let him know she was ready for the thing foremost on his mind, but the other thing was a quick shower to knock some of the sweat and dirt off his big, muscular body. To divert Su's thoughts of romance was somewhat impossible until he told her, "Su, come and wash my back for me. I need to get cleaned off for you first. OK, sweetheart?"

"Oh, sure, if you wash my back, too."

So because of some rather intimate moments, they finally got done with a thorough shower; and because of their intimate times during the showering, they headed for the bed only partly dried off, and Su was after him with her mouth. If there was any doubt about his readiness for her, she certainly put an end to that when she finished and sat on him so she could help him with the entry; and she went wild with her up-and-down motion until she almost screamed out with pleasure as they both came at once, and after she had kissed him

all over his face and neck, she breathlessly said, "Now we can rest, my Di?"

"I think that would be a very good idea, my love," answered Buz.

And so both of them, being thoroughly exhausted, fell soundly asleep until there was a knock at the huge door, which awakened both of them. Buz looked a bit puzzled but said, "I wonder what that maid wants. She's the only one who knows we are here beside your uncle Du."

Su Mei answered, "I'm not knowing, my Di. I will put on beautiful robe I find here, and I will go to find answer for you."

"Make sure you know the person before you open the door, my love," said Buz.

Betty went and looked through the little peephole in the door and discovered the same maid that had showed them around standing outside the door waiting. Betty opened the door and asked what was the matter. The maid replied that Uncle Du had a special meal prepared for them, and they could come as they were but not to take too long because the meal was getting cold.

Betty came trotting back to him and said, "No time for make love again, my Di. Du have special meal prepared for us and maid say it getting cold. Come with me, and we can get some energy back with Du's special meal, OK?"

So they quickly dressed and went down to the business floor where the maid met them and led them to the special private room and seated them side by side on one of the huge davenport with a large table in front of each one. The maid set them at the one with a steaming pot of coffee and a pitcher of what looked like ice-cold orange juice sitting on it and asked if they wanted her to pour their juice now or later. Buz was only interested in the coffee at that time and said, "No thank you. Just coffee now, please."

Betty was just the opposite and replied, "Juice for me, please."

By the time the maid had finished bringing in the plates filled with all Buz's favorites, Betty was amazed at the quantity of food that

was expected to be eaten by the two of them, and she ended up with only two slices of bacon and two eggs with three half slices of toast, then she sat back to watch Buz polish off the remaining half slices of toast, three eggs, and a huge plateful of hash browns. When he had finished, she said, "My Di, my goodness, do I have to feed you that much every morning?"

"No, my love. I will cook for you and most mornings, I will have steak and all those trimmings to be cooked my way, for you, and I will know how much to feed you so you don't get fat. I will love you still when you get fat with child, so you don't need to worry when you find that you are going to have my first son. At that time I think I will love you even more," explained Buz.

After finishing that special meal, Buz felt he should look for the sheriff as he had not seen him for quite a while. So he began looking for him by riding around town on Goldy's back. When found, the sheriff had no particular cases for Buz to work on, so he just said to take a ride out around town then go see if he could find any miners that needed help.

So Buz rode back to Chen Wang Du's place of business and was about to start up the three flights of stairs to the glorious suite Chen had supplied them with when Lily hurried up to him and said, "Di, syenshyung [Chinese for Mr.], you not have to walk up stairs, we have waiters' lift to take you up. I show you. Then you not waste time getting up to see Su Mei, yes?"

"OK, Lily. I need the exercise, but I'll let you show me where it is and I'll go up that way this time. I'll walk next time when I'm not in a hurry," Buz answered.

Lily took him to a little cubbyhole next to the kitchen and showed him where the button was hidden, pushed it, and the door opened almost immediately. They stepped in, and Lily showed Buz how to operate the little elevator, then stepped out and said, "You can run lift now, Di?"

"Why don't you come up with me and see if I hit the right spot on the wall to come back down. I'm sure my little Su will appreciate having someone to talk to about her wedding."

"OK, Mr. Buz, I be happy to help you and your Su Mei."

So up they went with Buz operating the unfamiliar elevator. Buz got out and went to find Betty and give her a kiss goodbye, telling her where he was going to be for the day and then informed her that Lily had come up with him to show him how to operate the elevator and then stay and talk to her about their wedding. Betty was happy to have someone to talk to but a little put out that Buz was leaving with just a little kiss of departure.

Buz finally got the elevator figured out, went downstairs, then out to the stables to get Goldy, and rode off for parts unknown to him.

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

**A**fter a short stay with Betty's uncle Wang Du, Buz had to hunt up the sheriff to see if he had anything for him to check on. When he finally found the office which he hadn't even visited yet, the sheriff was just sitting at his little desk. The desk was really not worthy of the office for which it was supplied, but the town was located in a very small county and, as such, there was not much money allotted to the county for law enforcement. So as could be expected, there wasn't much crime in Pahrump, and not much money was wasted on the office of and the sheriff himself. In fact, Buz was just appointed because the sheriff was getting pretty old and needed help if there happened to be a belligerent drunk in town.

So when Buz walked into the tiny office, the sheriff was just sitting there at his desk (two three-drawer cabinets with a handmade top fashioned out of an old door sitting on top of it) looking through a small stack of wanted pamphlets. As Buz walked in the door, he looked up and said, "I sure am glad to see you haven't changed your mind about being deputy for me, and I know there isn't much to do in Pahrump as far as serious crimes are concerned, but I do need you around and the county agreed with me. Why don't you set yourself down and go through these wanted posters with me. You need something to do to collect that deputy's healthy salary. You don't mind do you?" he asked.



"No, sir. I don't mind at all, but I did have something on my mind, though," answered Buz.

"Well now, what could that be, my boy?" asked the sheriff.

"Well, sir. I'm getting a little anxious to make myself worth the money that's being spent on me, and I thought maybe I could take my camping stuff and go out around the town to see what's what and where things are and what people are doing to keep them here. I don't expect to find much, but at least I can find the lay of the land around here so's I won't be too much of a stranger. Then after that, I'd like to take a couple weeks off and travel up to the area around Reno, where I'm told there are still some places where you can find gold and other precious stones in the riverbeds. I guess you could say 'I've got the fever' to some degree. And I'm getting married to the most beautiful Chinese girl, who is Chen Wang Du's niece. I'd like to take her up there where she can meet some of her kind of people."

The sheriff just kind of shrugged his broad old shoulders and said, "I should say 'Yes I do mind' but other than the fact tha you haven't been on the job for long enough, then again you could take this bunch of wanted posters and and keep your eyes open so I could justify giving you permission to go on up there to look for any of these here bad guys and you could take all the time you want as long as you don't overdo it. I'm getting too old to do this kind of work myself. So you just go ahead and have a good time with your new bride, and enjoy the old mining towns."

"Well, thank you, Sheriff. That's very nice and kind of you to think of a way for me to do what I've been wanting to do since I left home so long ago. I know Betty will enjoy having some time to visit with some of her own people, and that will make me a happier husband, making it possible to for me to do something for her. I didn't think I was going to miss my family when I first left home, but the farther I got away, the more I realized that my mother did try and talk my father into splitting his ranch between us boys. That is the reason I left my home. Because my father turned the whole ranch

over to my older brother, with whom I could not get along. And my grandfather was of the same mind with me and he left a small amount of his fortune to my sister, Brenda, and the rest to me. That's how I am able to support myself and get my own ranch, if I can ever find a suitable rangeland area to raise cattle and horses. You can probably tell how much I love horses and my Betty seems to take to horses like no woman I have ever known, 'cept for my ma."

"I'm sure you'll do fine, Buz. But not around here. This is definitely mining country with very few small areas where any ranch could be started and most of that is already taken. It's a shame I would like to have you around here to handle my deputy's job. But I'll look out for you until you decide to leave. Now, get on with you before I get too maudlin," said the sheriff with a sad look on his face. He'd really taken a healthy liking to Buz and his honesty and faithfulness in the short time he'd been in town.

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

**R**iding his favorite horse Goldy out on the bleak, lonely desert nearly void of any population at all, Buz could find nothing and nobody that would cause any trouble of any kind that he could think he was required for in an investigation of any sort. That was, until he came across an old prospector seemingly headed for town. The old man saw Buz with his weapon strapped on to his gun belt and his badge clearly visible to anyone that happened along. So the old man headed his mule in Buz's direction and stopped him by saying, "Hey there, Depudy, I got some news for you, if you'll just pull over here by this big rock so Ah kin rest a bit while I tell you what's happint."

"Why shore, old-timer. I got plenty of time to listen to what you have to say, if it's important," answered Buz. And he got down off Goldy and walked over to the tiny bit of shade the big boulder offered.

The old man got down off his mule, which was getting restless around Goldy. Her being a mare had drawn the interest of the mule for obvious reasons, but the old man noticed and gave the mule a swat on the nose and spoke to it with a sharpness that the mule must have recognized as he brayed loudly but backed off a ways and laid his ears back to let the old man know how he felt about him interrupting his attempt at friendliness with Buz's handsome-looking horse. When the mule finally settled down, the old man said, "Ah was just headed fer town to hunt up the sheriff, but now I won't have to ride this ornery

mule the rest of the way, Ah'll jist ride on back to muh claim and start digging agin. Jist last night, Ah heard this gunshot whall I's tryin' to sleep. Now Ah ain't afeard of nuthin' if'n Ah kin see what's what. But Ah'm not about to go runnin' out lookin' fer trouble. So Ah jist waited 'til mornin', thin Ah went out lookin' fer what happint."

"And what did you find, old-timer? If I could have your name, it would be a lot easier for me."

"Oh yeh, Ah'm sorry, Deputy, Ah'm Jed Turner."

"OK, Jed, now you can tell me what you have found and I have your name if I need to hunt for you later," replied Buz. Then he added, "If you need to get a hold of me, I'm Deputy Buz."

"Pleased ta meet ya, Deputy. Ah was over yonder lookin' at some promissin' ground this mornin' an' Ah sees this boot stickin' outa some mesquite brush, so Ah goes over closer so's Ah could see better, an' Ah fine out it's a body, deadern' a door nail. He been beat up perty bad an' then shot right in his face. So Ah din' thank there's no use checkin' closer," uttered Jed.

"OK, Jed. I need yah to come with me and show me the body, so I don't have to waste any time lookin'. And I need you to tell me where you were walkin' 'round also. We can't be messing up any clues I might find, that would help me to find who done that deed, you understand, Jed?"

Old Jed then led Buz over to what looked like a small entrance to a canyon that was enclosed by a bunch of mesquite and little saplings, and just inside this little entrance there was scuffed-up soil where someone had dragged something into the brush. No evidence of a fight that Buz could see, so the fight must have taken place elsewhere. Buz got Jed to help him carry the dead man out to where Goldy stood feasting on the dry vegetation, and they lifted the body up onto Goldy's back. She didn't like the smell of the dead man and started to shy away from them. Buz could handle her just by talking to her, so as he spoke softly to her, she eventually calmed down and accepted

the corpse being placed on her back where old Jed would have to ride behind Buz.

Buz grabbed some rope he had in his saddle bag and proceeded to tie the corpse on so it wouldn't slide off, then mounted Goldy and helped old Jed up behind him. As they rode back toward Pahrump, Buz asked Jed if he was familiar with the town, to which he answered, "Shore, Depudy. Ah was one of the lucky ones that first come to town and I found a little gold, jest enuff to pay for my shack, an' Ah thunk Ah was goin' ta be rich, but the gold wasn't enuff ta keep only us'n what really had the fever. Ah'm still lookin' fer a strike, cuz they say this here town will be rich in some kind of metal, an' Ah'm sure Ah'll be aroun'."

"Thet's interestin', Jed, but I need to know if there is a doctor in town and where can I find him?" asked Buz.

"Wal, thet's a hard un. Most times if ya need 'im, he cain't be found. If'n ya doen' need 'im ya goes to the neares' bar an' ya'll probly fine' 'im tockin' ta somebody. Why for ya need ta know, thet there body ain't moved a inch since ya tied 'im on ta this nag a yourn," asked Jed in his impeccable English.

"Well, Jed old boy, somebody in the medical field has to sign off that he's actually dead, and to determine how he died, and approximately when," answered Buz.

"Ah, yeah. How dumb of me. Ah ain't so quick on the uptake no more, but Ah guess Ah'd of figgered it out given a cuppla days. Ah thank it'd be best chance ta fine 'im at Chen Wang's place. He kinda hankers fer one of them China gals, and he hangs out there pretty much this time a day."

"Good. I know Chen's place pretty good myself. If I can get you to watch the body so's nobody can touch it while I'm inside, we'll just go on over there and see if he's there," remarked Buz.

"Shore. Ah gots nuthin pressin to do, so Ah kin set there on my mule and watch to see if that corpse tries to get away," replied old



Jed. His humor wasn't that good, but he kept on trying to make the conversation more interesting for Buz.

Buz sort of chuckled to himself at old Jed's stab at humor, then said to him, "OK, Jed. You just set there and I'll go see if I can find the doctor, and be right back in a few minutes. I don't want anybody to even touch that dead man, until the doctor has had a look at it. You understand that, don't you?"

"Yes, sir Depudy. Ya'all have made it priddy clear, yuh don' wand nobuddy to touch thet smelly thang," answered Jed.

"Right, Jed. I'll be right back, soon's I go lookin' fer the doc," said Buz.

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

**B**uz didn't think he needed to hurry too fast, because if old Jed started to get impatient, he could just walk a few steps and order himself a beer, and one of the cute little Chinese girls would bring it out to him. He was in no hurry to look in Chen Wang's place because his bride-to-be would be all over him and he would have to rebuke her somewhat, and that was the last thing he wanted to do to her. Best thing for him to do was get the aid of Lily to keep Betty from coming down to work while he was there on business. So when Lily came to help him when he finally had to look in Chen Wang's place of business, she was a little surprised at his desire to have Betty kept busy someplace else in the building because of her knowledge of the intimate relationship between the two of them; so Buz had to explain the situation and, paying attention to his every word, when he was through explaining himself, she said, "Ah, Buz. You worry me that something has happened to you and Betty. Now I understand, I not worry anymore, and I take you to doctor's table and shoo away his companion, so you can have a serious talk with the doctor."

"Thank you, Lily, I appreciate it," replied Buz.

The doctor was found talking to one of the young waitresses Chen employed, and he said, "Give me a few minutes to finish my conversation with Connie, and I'll be right with you to take you to my office, so we can get the paperwork taken care of. After we get the paperwork taken care of, you can tell me the details of where and who

found the body, as I sort of act as the medical examiner for this little populated county."

Buz then said, "I was beginning to wonder who I would have to look for next, and I guess I don't have to worry about that now. All I have to do now is find out who beat and shot this guy, then find the sheriff to make a report to."

"Finding the sheriff won't be a problem for you, because I will go looking for him myself so I can report your findings to him myself," replied the doctor, who then asked, "By the way, what is your name, so I can give credit where it is due?"

"I'm forgetting my manners doctor, my name is Buz Hagen, and I'm just recently appointed deputy sheriff, and what happens first thing, is I find myself a girl I intend to marry very shortly, then have to leave her when the old propector finds a body and I have to uphold my duty and take care of probably a very rare occurance in this whole county."

"You're sure right there, Deputy, it's been nye on to five years since we've had this bad an occurance in the whole county," remarked the doctor, who Buz found out later was John Anderson.

"Well, let's hope it was just a case of jealousy, and not a real murderer in our midst. I don't intend to stay around here very long, because I want to get Betty to my home in Texas so my family can meet her. She will charm them like she did me, I'm sure," replied Buz. "After that's done, I'll decide what's the best place to start up a ranch of my own and find me another deputy job to provide for a living while my ranch gets started. I truly believe in the law being upheld wherever I settle down to raising my family," he added as an afterthought.

"Well, let's get this body over to my office and try to figure out who he is, so you can start looking for the reason he was beat up so bad, and catch the guy who done the deed," said the good doctor.

Buz led the doctor to where Jed was watching the body, and the doctor immediately said, "My word, the guy that did this really made

a mess of the victim's face. We'll have to display the body in front of my office to see if anybody knows who he is. His clothes look a little familiar, but I can't go by that in identifying him. You'll have to have a positive ID before you can start asking questions about what happened to him, won't you?"

"You bet Doc. But the flies and whatever likes to feed on dead flesh will have him covered like a blanket. Certainly, this town doesn't have the equipment to ID him by his fingerprints and I doubt if the county even has the necessary equipment to do that, it's too new a system for counties to have the money for it yet. Just too new," explained Buz.

"Well, you just tell the newspaper about it and the editor-publisher will just grab it up and get his little scab sheet printed and make a big bundle off the curious people of the town and somebody will be able to tell who it is pretty quick," replied the doctor.

"OK, Doc. I'll lead my horse over to your office and unload the corpse so Goldy, that's my horse, can be rid of the smell and I can give her a rubdown before I start riding around asking questions. That is if you don't mind," stated Buz.

"No. you go right ahead and get started in questioning the townspeople. See if we can't come up with a quick answer. From the looks of his hands, I'd say the killer took a few blows himself," added the doctor.

Buz then unloaded the corpse and took Goldy over to the old stable, got permission from the old gentleman who appeared to be the owner, and gave Goldy a good washing and rubdown. When he had finished, Goldy began to act like she usually did by nuzzling him and begging for more attention. Buz usually treated her like she was his best friend, and for several years after she was just a young colt, she was his best friend. Now he was paying as much attention to Betty as he could, and Goldy had to be talked to and made to realize that Betty would be around and probably learn to love a horse as much as Buz

did. Buz swore that Goldy could understand his every thought, and at times the horse would either nod or shake her head at something that Buz had said or done. It made for an unusual sight for a stranger to walk by and find Buz talking to Goldy and see her shake her head at something she didn't agree with.

But now Buz was alone with Goldy, and he got her all cleaned up and groomed to go around town and start asking questions of the townspeople. So far he was getting nowhere, but he was sure he would find someone that knew something about the woman that had been beaten so badly when he found out who the victim was.

Buz was excited when the doctor got a hold of him when he was talking to one of the bar owners and told him he had the person who recognized the person who had been beaten and disfigured so badly. He was feeling very much relieved he didn't have to remain in the dark as much as he felt he would have been had not someone come forward saying they knew the person that had been murdered. So he followed the doctor over to his office to talk to the person that could identify the victim.



## CHAPTER SIXTEEN

**W**hen Buz finally got a chance to talk to the man who claimed to know the corpse, he first asked the man his name, which was Stan Short. Short began right off by saying, "I knew Adam was going to get in trouble with somebody over that barmaid."

Buz immediately broke in on Stan's comments and said with suspicion in his mind, "Mr. Short, I'm sorry to have to interrupt you but I need to know why you are so sure this man was going to get into trouble, and with whom was he going to get in trouble?"

Stan Short was a little impatient with the deputy but continued on by saying, "Ah! He kept following this barmaid around, trying to get her in bed with him and the bartender kept telling him she wasn't that kind of girl, and she was spoken for besides."

That sounded awfully familiar to Buz, and he was almost holding his breath waiting for the answer and couldn't stop thinking maybe Betty was just playing with him. But Short finally said, "Her name is Candy, and she is a sweet little girl, who has fallen for one of the miners that works for the biggest mine left around here. That man lying there is one of the dumbest jerks I have ever met. His name was Joe Cannon. He was so dumb, you could ask him if he had change for a twenty and he'd say, 'Sure. I got five ones, two fives and a ten.' If you were crooked enough you'd get away with five extra dollars by just saying, 'That's fine,' and stick your paw out and he'd hand you what you wanted," explained Short. Then he went on to say, "I've

been trying to tell him he was going to make trouble for the guy Candy was going with, but he was a pretty strong guy, and he told me he could take care of himself. Most of the time he could, but he kept getting into fights all over town just because somebody would try to take advantage of his dimwittedness and he was very sensitive about his brain problems."

At this point, Buz tried to get Short to tell him who it was that he was so sure had done the beating and then shooting the victim to delay the law from finding out who actually murdered Joe. However, he got the impression that the man talking about how dumb someone else was was not quite all there himself, so he had to approach this man with all the tact he could muster up.

"Mr. Short, as I have told you, I am the new deputy sheriff of this county, and with the sparseness of the population here now, after the gold fever has calmed down, I am going to have to talk to every man I am able to find that has been in a fight with Joe at any time. Now if you know who that man is, it would help save me from having to spend so much time talking to people who probably don't even know about the fights Joe had. Could you please be a good guy yourself and let me know who did this to Joe. You see, I am a God-fearing man and I don't want to have to shoot anybody, and I won't if I can just come up to the man and tell him not to try anything with me because I am putting him under arrest. What about it? Are you going to be a good guy and tell me who did this madman killing?" asked Buz.

"What if he finds out it was me that told you about him, what happens to me if he gets to me before you can arrest him?" queried Stan.

"Mr. Short, we've always talked in privacy, and I don't see how he could know you told me anything. If I have missed something and he knows already, you are probably in danger of losing your life too. So my advice is tell me now so I can get him and put him in the tiny little jail this town uses to hold Saturday night drunks. Are you going to tell me so I can protect you?" answered Buz.

"I guess I got no choice. His name is Andy Williams, and you can probably find him in any one of the bars 'cept maybe Chen's place."

"If I can find him before he gets wind of me talking to you."

Now Buz went to his room at Chen's place and put his badge on in a very conspicuous place on the front of his vest and buckled on his .45, making sure it was not hindered should he have to draw it fast, and settled it on his hip in the best position for that quick draw he had practiced for so many years. He sat down for a few minutes and relaxed himself until he felt confident he could handle anyone who might be foolish enough to try and outdraw him in the event of trouble. Then he got up and descended the stairs and quietly got past Betty on his way out. He headed for the last bar in town figuring to work his way back toward Chen's place, planning to warn everyone he encountered not to go tell Andy he was being looked for.

The last bar on the street was known for its tough owner who worked the bar and was known to keep a shotgun under both ends of the bar. And he took care not to let anyone have a gun in sight while in his bar. So when Buz entered, the owner was standing talking to one of his regular customers; and Buz, being aware of the two shotguns under the ends of the bar, immediately said as the owner started for where one of the shotguns was known to be at hand, "Don't you dare touch that shotgun, Charley, or I'll be obliged to shoot one of your ears off."

The owner looked at him, astonished at the fact that someone would dare to talk to him in the manner just described, and he continued to the end of the bar. Buz whipped out his big old .45 and put a shot just past his ear. Charley jumped back away from the end of the bar and exclaimed, "Whuh! Who are you anyway? This here's my place and I aim to keep it safe for my customers."

So Buz took the time to tell him about his recent appointment as the law in this part of the county and that he was looking for Andy Williams to have a talk with him.

Charley quickly replied, "He ain't here. He makes too much trouble for my regular customers and I won't allow him in here. I'd be mighty obliged if you wouldn't come in here with your weapon strapped on like that."

"If I come back here on business, I will always be armed in case I need it," answered Buz. "Otherwise I tend to favor Chen's place and his nice clean girls." With that rather obvious comment, Charley said, "I run a clean place here Deputy. I pay my dues and I have my girls checked every month. Who told you this was not a clean place, anyway?"

Buz declined to answer that question because he was afraid he would be causing a serious kind of problem and he didn't want that to happen, so he just shrugged his shoulders and turned around and walked out the door on his way to the next place that also had a reputation for doing the night-time kind of business.

The next place Buz stopped in, the bartender was more businesslike. He had gotten the word that the new deputy sheriff was looking for Andy Williams to have a talk with, so when Buz came in the door, he immediately came down to the end of the bar and greeted him with a smile on his face saying, "Well. How do, Deputy. Welcome to my place of business. How can I be of service to you?"

"Well, I'm not seeking the kind of business you are noted for. I would like to know if you've seen Andy Williams lately? I'd like very much to have a talk with him. Have you seen him lately?" replied Buz.

"Well, sir, Deputy, I can't say that I have although he does come in here on occasion," answered the bartender.

"Well, if he does come in, don't say a word about me looking for him, because I don't want him to start taking a vacation in some far-off land. If you do I will come around to your place and make things difficult for you to continue in your obviously successful business. You get my meaning?" replied Buz.



## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

**B**ecause of the altitude and the hot climate, Buz was very glad he chose his route to follow the old portion of Highway 90 that took him up to Tonopah, where the more improved highway joined the old, and he decided to stop at Tonopah and have a good meal at one of the casinos. While there, he talked with the bartender to see if maybe the beer was a bit more refined in flavor and seek information about the guy he was looking for. In so doing, he had a bit of luck, because the bartender had talked to Buz's fugitive.

When Buz had finished talking with that particular bartender, he'd found that his man was talkative and had told the bartender how he'd beat the living daylights out of the guy he'd had to fight with and that he'd planned on going to his favorite casino (Circus Circus) in Reno to see if he'd have any luck at the slots, then play a little poker at one of the tables.

So now Buz knew he was on the right track and where to look for his man. With this information in mind, Buz rather excitedly climbed back in his rented truck and headed, once again, for Reno and his quarry. In those days, Reno was already a refuge of the almost rich and the rich alike—miners from the most recent gold and silver discoveries in the mountainous areas around Carson City. There were several little towns where the Comstock Lode was discovered. Buz was to find that the most difficult roads were around Carson



City, which used to be the most heavily populated city in the state of Nevada and is still the capital of Nevada.

Buz continued on to Reno and found a place he could board his horses and right away wanted to get to Circus Circus, find his man, and get back to Pahrump and Betty. But first he needed to feed and care for his horses. That chore taken care of, he went to the Circus Circus Casino and found himself a friendly bartender to talk to.

While he found that most of the bartenders at Circus Circus were too busy filling orders from the cute, young (most of them) Bargirls that earned more from tips of the drunks that were trying to get them to a nice clean bedroom with a soft mattress (the girls were prohibited by law from accepting dates from any man while in the bar in which they worked) and were kept very busy passing out what used to be free booze back in those days, so a lot of people were taking advantage of the slightly watered-down drinks. As a result, the bartenders were kept very busy at the popular casinos in town. So Buz decided that maybe he'd find a bar that was not so busy, and if by chance Andy had decided the same thing and tried to find a game at another bar, he might have explored the area and visited some of the other bars.

With this in mind, Buz walked out of the Circus Complex and headed downtown, which was on the other side of the railroad tracks. Crossing the tracks was easy, and the first bar he came to was Fitzgerald's, which was on two floors. The first floor had no poker games in action there, so he went upstairs and found a couple of tables that were rather active and had a young lady that was rather exceptionally good-looking waiting on the men that were playing; but the system of free drinks was a bit different as the barmaid had to go down to the first floor to fill her orders, so one of the bartenders was not kept so busy. He was apparently assigned to the barmaids from upstairs. As such, for certain periods he'd be working as fast as he could, then the girls would go back up to the second floor and distribute their customers' drinks and collecting another batch of orders.

This interval left the bartender free for a few minutes, and Buz took advantage of the break between filling drink orders from one or the other of the girls from upstairs and asked the bartender the necessary questions, getting an immediate answer from Al, the bartender he caught with a few minutes of inactivity. As soon as he mentioned Andy's name to him, he perked up and said, "Yeah! I was talking to him the other day. He was full of himself for doing away with some guy down in Pahrump, but I think he was just trying to make me feel like he was a real tough guy. He was so beat-up looking that I felt he was just telling me a story that didn't hold water, because his eye was black as coal, and I could see bruises all over his face. So I don't believe a word of what he said about his big fight," answered the bartender.

Buz immediately responded, saying, "Oh, you can believe him all right. Even to the part about him doing away with his opponent. He did, in fact, do away with him, because he shot him right in the face!" Then Buz went on to tell the bartender that he was not acting but was a real deputy sheriff and was looking for him to have a talk with him.

When Al heard what Buz had to say, he responded to him with a bit of awe but immediately said, "I was just going along with the guy listening to him like I was real interested in the words he had to say. I thought it would make a good conversation piece for some of my drunken customers."

"Well, I think you'd be correct there, my friend. But I wish you wouldn't put in the part about doing away with his opponent. As true as that part was, I don't want that spread around, because I don't want him to know that I am on his trail. Besides, he has a violent temper, and that someone is apt to set him on fire. He's just like a pile of nice dry kindling waiting to be lit." Then Buz continued by asking if he had heard where Andy might be holed up.

The bartender had to break off the conversation to fill another batch of orders but said, "Don't go away. I'll be right back, soon's I finish with this gal's orders so she can collect her tips."

Buz just held up his hand and made a motion that said as much as "Don't you worry about it, man, I know all about what this business is all about." And Al walked down to the other end of the bar where the barmaids set their trays while they waited for the order to be filled.

Not too long after, Al returned and said, "Now. Where were we?"

To which Buz replied, "I was trying to get some information on where that banged-up killer might be at this time."

"Oh, yeah! I remember now. You wanted to know if he did any talking about where he planned to go. Right?" asked Al.

"You got it my friend. What did he say that you think you can believe?" asked Buz.

"Well, sir. I tried to get him to tell me where he was from, but he just said, 'Pahrump.' I wasn't sure that was so, but I tried a little more evasive tactics to get him to talk a little more, and asked him where he was headed next 'cuz I was interested in the travels of all my customers so I'd have something to write about in my journal I keep. I'm thinking I have almost enough to start a book I've wanted to write, when I get done listening to all the drunks I've come into contact with. Anyway, after a lot of prodding he told me, he was planning on catching the little V&T train the goes up to Gold Hill and Carson City. He claimed there were reports of more gold being found up there and he was going to go get him a claim on some land and see if he could dig up some of the glittery stuff," said Al.

"That sounds about like what I've been hearing all along the way. I sure appreciate you spending your time talking to me, and I'll let it be known where I got my information, where and when I catch up with him and put him away for a good long while for what he has done." "Thanks a lot, Al," Buz replied and stuck out his hand to shake hands with his informant.

Al replied in return, "No problem with me trying to be a help for the law," said Al.

## CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

**W**hen Buz left the second of his stops, he finally came to a building that contained a legitimate-type business: a clothing store with goods that were designed for the working class people that visited the store. At least that's what the heavily made-up woman that came to wait on Buz wanted most people to think. When asked if she knew Andy Williams at all, her answer was "I shore do, Deputy. He's a regular customer of mine. Buys all his work clothes from me."

"That being the case, have you seen him lately? I'd like to speak with him," said Buz.

"Well, Deputy, I would be silly to say I hadn't because I know you'd be back again and again and that's not good for my kind of business. Is it?" she replied.

"That's about the size of it ma'am," answered Buz.

So the woman replied matter-of-factly, "Yeah he was in here yesterday, but he didn't want a girl this time. He wanted some fresh clothes. Said he was going to go to Las Vegas to gamble at one of the bigger casinos."

"Ah, now we're getting someplace. What did he look like? Any sign of him having been in a fight recently?" asked Buz.

"Well, I'd have to be telling you the truth, because I know you'd be coming back here, and it wouldn't look good for my kind of business. He looked terrible. Eyes puffy, lips swollen, and bruises all over his face. But that wasn't anything unusual for him. He was always getting



into fights over his girlfriend. I told him to go back to my place in the back of the building and get some ice to put on his face to knock the swelling down."

"One more thing Maude. Does he often pack a gun around?" asked Buz.

"Well, it's never in sight, but I know when I see somebody with a gun. I need to know for my girls' protection and my own. He tries to hide his in his jacket pocket. But, like I said, I have to know these things and if he wasn't a regular customer, I'd make him leave his gun with me. It's a huge sucker, must be a .45, one of the newer models."

"Thanks, Maude. You've been a big help. But I must warn you not to tell anyone I have been in here questioning you. I have to talk with him about a murder and I do?"

"I think I see what you are driving at. He's apt to come afer me if he finds out I've told you anything. Ain't that so? I'd not want him to be prepared with some phoney story, or alibi. You understand what I have just told you?"

"Right you are, Maude. And I would feel bad if he came around and shot you just for telling me how he looked when you last saw him." Then Buz thanked her again for the information and told her that he had to make the long trip up to Reno where all the big gamblers go to waste their money. He wanted to catch him doing something he shouldn't.

After asking someone else if he could trust the information he had gotten from Maude and been told that in spite of her unsavory looks, anything she told him could be trusted, he then went back to Chen's place where he was now an honored guest with a furnished and very nice suite simply because he fell in love with his adopted niece and was planning to marry her. He figured he needed to tell her that he was going to be gone for a while and not to worry about him. So he went and took Betty aside to tell her what he was planning, and she got all upset because she knew the dangers involved.



It took a little talking, but he finally convinced her that everything would be all right and that it had to be done. She halfheartedly gave up and said she would pray for him to get back with no difficulties, but she wouldn't let him go without kissing him goodbye. That pleasantness taken care of, Buz finally hired a good-sized truck to haul his horses and camping gear and got under way for Reno.

## CHAPTER NINETEEN

**A**fter receiving this information, Buz considered himself to be pretty lucky in that he didn't have to travel all over the whole town trying to find somebody that had any contact with the fugitive. He decided to take a day or two to rest up and get back some of his energy with the good, cheap meals one could find at some of the better casinos back in those days when you could get a full steak-and-eggs breakfast for under ten dollars. Besides, the buffet dinners where you could eat what you wanted and for such a small amount that you felt the Casino was practically giving away their profits were, in fact, cutting out some of their profits to reduce their income tax bill. More than one casino offered the really fabulous meal of steak and eggs for \$2.99, and that was all day long. There was only one problem with the goodies: the service given for the cheap meal included only a pot of coffee set on the table, and you poured your own refill. No waitress would come around to check up on you and see if you wanted anything else. At least not until you were presented with your bill.

But Buz's main purpose coming there wasn't to try and figure ways for the casinos to save money. On the contrary, he was there for specifically two purposes. The main purpose, of course, was to try and arrest a murderer. The second purpose was to find himself a nice piece of good range land, or at least good enough to start his ranch where he could make changes as needed.

With all Buz had on his mind, another problem arose while he was in the process of finding somebody that might help him to decide on some land to look at when he was set to take the V&T Railroad's daily train to Gold Hill and all the little towns along the way. He knew it would probably cost him a pretty penny to rent a whole car just so he could take Goldy along to do his exploring, so he left her behind in a stable he figured would care for her the way he described to the hand that ran the stable.

Buz caught the V&T Railroad in Reno, and in those days you could ride to all the little towns along the way and get back on the next train that came by headed up the steep grade to Gold Hill and finally to Virginia City. The year was 1937, and the railroad was doomed to close in '38, so Buz found that he'd lucked out in one sense. In another, he thought that the number of tourists that visited Gold Hill would be considerably reduced. At that time, he wanted to pass off as one of the tourists, so his weapons were put into a large hand-carried bag. Broken down for carrying, it passed the inspection of the deputy who was assigned to keep gun-toting people out. Buz needed his guns in case the fugitive wanted to get away by shooting his way to freedom. To facilitate the carrying of his bag and not getting the suspicion of the deputy aroused, he purchased a couple of golf clubs and stuffed them into the bag to make it look like he was looking for a place to play golf which, as a stranger to the area, he wouldn't know there just wasn't room for golf in any of the towns that were mining for gold or silver.

Heading south from Reno—where the big gamblers came to spend their fortunes trying to break the banks of Reno—on the V&T Line, you pass through such little towns as Anderson Flat, Gold Hill, Silver City, and Carson City, along with the tiny wayside spots not big enough to call towns, but Anderson Flat was the only one that was good enough for a ranch. When Buz stopped there, he was told that the land was already a working ranch and was not for sale. So Buz headed back to Gold Hill where he found that there were a

number of bawdy houses. As distasteful as these places were, he visited several of them until he found one that had entertained Andy just the night before and had said he would be back after finding a doctor to fix his broken nose.

Buz thought, "At last I've caught up with him," and proceeded to tell the madam that he would like to rent a room, with no girl, so he could be present when and if the fugitive returned. Renting a room with no girl required an explanation, so he said, "Ma'am, I'd like to trust you, if possible, to help me catch a very dangerous man. Is that a possibility?"

"Well, what do I get out of that if I do help you, mister?" she replied.

"Do you recall that I said something about a very dangerous man," he stated rather bluntly.

"Yeah, I seem to recall that little phrase. To many guys come in that are known to be a danger and I employ three or four men that are pretty dangerous themselves. So why should I worry about this guy?" she answered back with a glint in her eyes.

"Ma'am, this guy doesn't look dangerous, but if he's had a few drinks and wants something from one of your girls that doesn't want to supply him with, he'll just go crazy and smack the girl around. She'd be dead before your big tough guys could get there to help her, and I don't like to see anyone hurt. Are you still going to be hesitant, ma'am?"

"Well, no. I can be as honest as the situation calls for, and I guess you have convinced me that this is one of those times," she replied with a little more civil attitude.

"OK. I'm going to have to trust you. You see, I am a deputy sheriff from Pahrump. The man we are talking about is running from a senseless murder of an old-timer who'd discovered a small deposit of gold that he didn't want to reveal the location of, and this tough guy tried to beat the information out of his victim, only to find out he wasn't so tough because the old man was a former boxer and he

defended himself so well that this guy went for his gun and shot the poor old-timer, then took his money and left town before anyone could find the body.

"Luckily, I was on my rounds of the town and found the body and through questioning all the barkeeps in the town I found out who the guy was and then how to go about finding him. I am actually out of my jurisdiction but I'm sure your law will find it worth his while to cooperate with me and not give me any trouble," he explained to her. Then he said, "Not only am I sorry for taking away some of your business, but I want to thank you right now for your cooperation. You'll be taking one menacing individual off these small streets."

"All I can say to that is, I'm happy to be of service to a friendly law man, and you are certainly welcome. I think you'll find out that our rooms are comfortable and clean," replied the madam.

With that taken care of, Buz grabbed his big bag, walked up the one flight of stairs, found his room, and proceeded to take his Winchester out of its bag. Since he'd had to break it down to barrel and stock, it was all ready for cleaning and lubricating with his favorite brand of gun oil. It was a good thing he'd gotten his room so early in the day, because the process of cleaning his rifle and his .45, then oiling up his holster so that nothing could go wrong if he had to draw quickly enough to keep from having to shoot his opponent, took quite a while.

When he'd finished cleaning and had practiced his draw a few times, he figured to lie down and get some rest, so he cleaned all his equipment off the bed and lay down to take a quick nap. He fell into a deep sleep that was disturbed by the noise of a woman screaming. The first thing he could think of was "Oh man! I've overslept and that guy is drunk again." He got up off the really comfortable bed, strapped on his .45, and went out in the hall to determine which direction the screaming had come from.

As he stood there, he was sure the screaming woman hadn't been disposed of yet but was also sure that she had really taken a good,



hard belt that must have hurt her pretty bad, because he could hear her moaning and somebody talking to her in a low, subdued voice. And he was able to tell that the girl was in the room next to his and on the side away from the stairwell. So as cautiously as he could, he took out his .45 and walked over to the door.

## CHAPTER TWENTY

**A**fter determining the near certainty of the occupants of the door he approached cautiously, he used his .45 to rap on the door. He only had to wait a matter of seconds before the fugitive opened the door a crack and said, "Don't be botherin' me when I'm busy with this broad . . . uh, what you pointin' that cannon in my face for?"

Before he said a word, Buz made sure his size 12 boots were planted firmly with one blocking the door so it couldn't be closed without a very vicious stomp on his left boot, then said, "I am Buz Hagen, the new deputy sheriff of the Pahrump area, and I am here to arrest you for aggravated assault and murder of one of the nicer girls in Mr. Chen's harem. Now back up and lock your hands behind your head. We can do this the easy way or the bloody way. Your choice."

Andy's first choice was to try and close the door, but when that failed on the first attempt, he decided to try and talk his way out of the obvious charges of what he was now doing, that of resisting arrest. So when Buz put his rather large shoulder to the door and got into the room, Andy went to his usual action when confronted with trouble: he tried to land a roundhouse swing on Buz's chin. Buz was no slouch when it came to fisticuffs, so he merely blocked the wild swing and delivered a good hard uppercut to Andy's rather flabby midsection, followed by a right cross to the temple. That punch was so well delivered that the man just sagged to the floor, which made it

easy for Buz to fit his handcuffs on with the hands behind the back so he couldn't cause any more trouble.

Once Buz had his fugitive well subdued, he had to get him back on the V&T and transport him to the jail in Reno. Then he asked where he could find the county offices to fill out papers citing his captive and impose on someone to get the man back to Pahrump to face the judge there. Buz explained that he had rented a truck to haul his horse in case he needed to hit the high, mountainous country in search of his fugitive, and he wasn't too anxious to drive all that way again with a dangerous man as passenger. The police chief was understanding and told Buz to "just leave the bugger where he's at. We'll get a hold of the old sheriff there, and have him send a car to pick him up."

So Buz hired another truck to haul Goldy back to Pahrump and set out as fast as he could. With the solution of what everyone thought was going to be an unsolved case of murder from the start, Buz was going to make himself a good start in finding a larger department and more cases to solve in his need for a good job to support Betty and the child he was sure was on the way. He really didn't want to settle back in Texas. He had in the back of his sharp mind that the mines in Idaho and Montana would have the kind of men that were used to getting into trouble working for them, and the wide open country in the state of Montana would surely provide him with the land he was seeking to start his ranch.

With this thought in mind, he hurried to get back to Betty and get married so he could take a vacation back at his folks' place before Betty got too far along to travel to meet his family. He hooked up the horse trailer with all his weapons and camp gear in it and got on the road back to Pahrump, stopping along the way to give Goldy a rest stop and a short ride for her exercise that had been neglected for too long; then, his horse taken care of, he climbed back in the old truck and once again hit the road for Pahrump.

When he arrived back in Pahrump, Buz was greeted by several strangers who were obviously the victims of Andy's rage at one time

or another, and they of course knew Andy had been captured and that it was Buz who had apprehended him and were gathered to thank him for a job well done. And Betty, having to wait for so long to get her man wrapped around her little finger, was a little impatient with all the attention Buz was getting; so when he finally came to her, she put on the unattended to look and began shedding a few tears.

When Buz took her in his arms and asked her what the problem was, she said, "I not think I want my man to be law person. You be gone too long from me, and I scare you get hurt."

"Ah, sweetheart, I am very careful, and I am so sorry you have to worry about me. If you want, I will turn in my badge and we'll get married as soon as it can be arranged. Would you like that?" Buz quickly answered.

"Oh, my Di Ur. I not want you to give up what you like to do. You sure you not be mad at me?" she asked.

"No, little one. I want to do what makes you happy. You are all that matters to me now," he replied.

"Then, we get married next week. I have send invites to all your family and all my friend here, so they know we get married next week. I take chance you be here and want me as you wife. I not hear from anyone yet. Maybe we just take vows and not get presents for our home, but I not care long as I get you."

"Whoa. You were pretty sure you had me on the string and was telling Chen Syen Sheng the truth, weren't you?" Buz reacted with a big smile on his face.

"You bet! My man not get away from me, if I can help," she replied.

Another couple of days went by and still no word from his family, and Buz began to feel that he did not have the approval of his mother or his father on the matter of his marrying a Chinese girl. Thinking back, he realized that his father had been hurt financially by some of the crooked Chinese that had become a part of their city in Texas when gold was discovered. The gold had not lasted long, and few people got much out of it, so most of the Chinese that had come for

the work required to get what gold there was had departed. But a few remained to set up small businesses, and everyone that had done so was suspected of dishonest practices.

As a result of Stan Hagen's dealings with some of the crooked silk-producing companies, he had gotten taken too many times to trust anyone with slanted eyes and was probably ignoring his son's marriage. Since he had promised Betty that he would quit his desire to be a detective and resign from his rather weak position with the county's shaky police department, which was no more than a gaming-house watchdog, he could take all the time he needed to go home and try to make his family see the honesty of Betty's character and the beauty of her as a person. But most of all, he wanted to let them know that she was his forever, regardless of how they felt about his marrying her. He was pretty sure that Betty would influence his family not only with her sweetness and honesty but with her homelike cooking and housekeeping.

The family did welcome Buz back from his new adventure but were not too friendly with Betty. They took over one of the bunkhouses, and in no time, Betty was getting to be good friends with Buz's two sisters, one of whom had surprised the rest of the family by getting married and was suddenly getting pregnant. When Betty found out her sister-in-law was in the same condition she was, they became fast friends through all the things they had to talk about. When Buz's family found out how well the oldest daughter got along with Betty, they started to come around to find out how nice a girl Buz had found to fall in love with and marry. All this without the approval of his family.

After about two weeks of resting, taking Betty for horseback rides around the whole of the ranch, and slowly getting the family accustomed to Betty being part of the closely knit family, they finally got reservations on a train leaving Amarillo for parts north and requiring transfer to another line in Denver to get them to Butte, Montana.



## CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

**A**rriving in Butte after three days of stopping at several locations along the way and gradually getting closer to their prior decided-upon destination, Buz was shocked at the lack of activity. What used to be considered the richest hill in the world was just a big hole in the land, and when they looked closer at the mine's location, they could see that it was slowly filling up with water.

Not only was the mine filling up with water that could not be used for anything but chemically extracting the copper from it but the population was dwindling because of the loss of so many jobs. In one way, that was good news for Buz and Betty. Land would surely be getting cheaper and more available. But Buz was really in Butte for he was showing his new wife what happens to the gold, silver, copper, or whatever minerals were being mined, and he still wanted to take her to the area around Anaconda and the small town of Phillipsburg. On the lightly traveled road through Phillipsburg, there was a number of small towns that had sprung up when gold was discovered. But the gold strike was not a large one, and some of the area became ghost towns.

Betty was really interested in the gold towns, because people were still finding small patches of gold, so Buz let her walk around to look for any gold that someone had maybe dropped. And she was interested in the shanties where some of the people who came to mine lived. In the town that was advertised as a ghost town, the

shanties were very easy to find. The gold was not easy at all; you had to pan for it in the nearby river. Once Betty's curiosity about the shanties was satisfied, Buz wanted to go on to Missoula where he had heard there was some land available. Betty agreed that there wasn't too much more for them to see since she only was interested in the shanties because she had come from one of the small peasant towns where almost everybody lived in a shanty.

So they climbed into their rented car and drove north to Missoula. For Buz, who was raised around horses and in fact rode his horse Goldy a good long way over some of the passes, he was nervous driving a rented car over some of the higher passes in the state. But he relaxed a bit when they came to Missoula sitting in sort of a valley where the land was mostly low, mountainous, grassy green properties that sloped upward to the mountains that surrounded the pretty town of maybe fifty thousand people. The scenery was magnificent, and Betty said, "This very pretty, I think this be the place we live, OK?"

"Whatever you want, my sweet. Now I will be looking for a real estate agency to help us find the place we need. It shouldn't be hard to find an agent to help us with all the houses and businesses that have for sale or rent signs in their windows. We'll just drive up one of the streets and find one that looks like they know what they are doing and get the address so we can go see what they have."

As they headed for the business section of town, they noticed that every so often there would be a For Sale sign on a house, some of which had looked like they had been vacant for quite some time. But they were not interested in just a house, so they stopped at the first agency that looked like it had good, qualified agents to help them find what they wanted. The agent stuck out his hand and said, "Hi, folks. I'm the lucky one to help you find the kind of home you'll love. We've got access to many different homes that are just waiting for someone to move in. Tell me what you are looking for and I'll probably know

right where I can get a good deal for you. My name is Jim Huber, but I would be honored if you would just call me Jim."

Buz smiled broadly and said, "I've been called a good many things in my short life, but my given name is Buster, and believe me, I'd really prefer Buz, and this is my wife Su Mei. Her American name is Betty."

"Oh! I'm pleased to meet you Buz and Betty. Now, what can I do to help you buying or selling? We are here to do either one or both," replied Jim.

"Well, sir, I am in the market for a piece of land where I can start a ranch. I don't need more than a couple thousand acres, and I'll get by with a couple hundred to start with if it is good range land with plenty of good grass, because I intend to raise a crop of hay to feed my cattle and horses. Can you come up with that kind of land around here?" answered Buz.

"Well, I may have to spend some time finding the right party that owns land like that, but I know of a few that are tired of this part of the state and want to get away from here, but they don't want to leave their property to someone that will let their hard work go to dust or waste of one kind or another. And that means you would have to guarantee that you would keep the land going and not let the weather get you down. In the winter we get snow and the summer is good and hot. You think you can handle that?" asked Jim.

"You bet we will. I'm from Texas and I have experienced the worst kind of weather you could imagine on the ranch I was raised on. I picked this spot because my new wife says she wants to live among the animals and scenery she has seen so far. We are on our honeymoon, effectively, and I must get back to my job rather soon, because I am the only deputy sheriff in the whole county. The sheriff wants me to take his job for him so he can retire. But if you can find me what I want, I will have to make my apologies to him and he'll have to look for another man to take over for him," said Buz in an effort to convince him of his honesty.

Jim the salesman just stood there nodding his head as he listened to Buz's story, and when he was through he said, "You sound like the right man for the place I have in mind, Buz. I'll see what I can do with the owner of the property I have in mind. You keep checking with me and I should have an answer for you in a day or two."

## CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

**B**uz took Betty to a campground and set up their tent, unrolled their sleeping bags, and then got a good-sized fire going. Betty was amazed at Buz's ability to get a good fire going so rapidly. She was all set to start cooking them something to eat when Buz said, "Wait just a few minutes, sweetheart. I want the fire to die down a bit, then I'll cook you a good dinner Western style." Then he went to the car and got a few things he had purchased back when he had bought their new car.

When Buz came back to the fire, he had all the ingredients for Spanish rice: rice, onions, carrots, salt, garlic buds, and olive oil. The hamburger was in a separate container with a hunk of ice to keep the meat as cool as possible. Betty was astonished and said, "Buz, where you get all stuff for making dinner?"

Buz just smiled at her and said, "My love, I snuck out and got things to surprise you with hoping you will like this as well as I do. It has been my favorite ever since my mother showed me how to make it. 'Course, she had a stove, but I've made it a couple times on our outdoor grill, for which I am going to try to find three or four big stones to make a substitute grill."

Then Buz left Betty alone for a few minutes while he found some good-sized stones and brought them back and arranged them on the glowing red-hot coals. Then he took the skillet out of his things and set it on the stones and decided that he had a pretty level pan, so he



poured some of the olive oil on the pan. While that was heating up, he quickly chopped up an onion. The skillet was hot enough by that time to make the onions sizzle. He let them get brown while he chopped up some carrots and the garlic buds, which he sprinkled around the pan, then got about a cup or so of rice and added it to the pan. With a stick found close by, he stirred the things now in the pan until the rice appeared to be browned enough, then he squished the hamburger so it hit the pan well spread over the rest of the ingredients and kept it from getting too well cooked by continuing to stir the whole thing, trying hard, of course, to avoid knocking any of it out into the fire. The hamburger looked like a huge patty, but while stirring the mass, he got the hamburger broken up into small pieces so the rice and the rest of the ingredients mixed in well.

"Wait 'til you taste it, sweetheart. I hope you like it well enough to cook it for me often," said Buz.

By now, Betty was breathing deeply trying to get the odor of what was being cooked for her. Finally she said, "Umm! That beginning to smell good, my Buz. You a good cook, I get plates for you to serve me. It loooks so good. I proud of you."

After the rice and hamburger had cooked the right amount, Buz took his big spoon and dished up a generous amount for himself and just enough for Betty to see if she liked it. When she noticed the size of the two helpings, she said, "How come you give me little bit? I hungry and only bread to eat. I bet you be nice and wait I taste first. I know you good man, do everything good. I want more of good stuff," she pled.

"OK, OK, Su Mei. I didn't mean to make you starve. I've got a can of stew I was going to put in the coals to heat while you tried my cooking," answered Buz happily.

When they had finished eating, Betty said, "Uuumm. I right. You make good cook. Now I be good wife and clean up dishes."

Betty was cleaning up the dishes by taking them down to the creek and scooping sand into them and swishing it around, dumping

the sand in the river and repeating the process a couple times, and then rinsing the sand out by setting them in the water for a few minutes, and letting the current of the creek wash them out.

Buz had watched her for a few minutes to make sure she knew what she was doing, then he went looking for more wood for the fire. He came back with about all he could carry and stoked the fire so the tent would absorb some of the heat while they sat together on a log and began making love to each other. Pretty soon, Betty said, "I go warm up sleeping bags for you, my Buz. This not good place for to make love we both want."

With that, Betty gave him a very wet kiss and went into the tent. Before she did anything else, she made sure the two bags were zipped together, then got her clothes off and climbed into the bags. She was only in there for a few minutes while Buz made the fire as big as he dared, then came through the opening in the front of the tent, zipped it up, and began getting undressed only to have Betty say, "No. My love, please get in and let me do. I getting cold waiting for you."

So Buz had his shoes and socks off and was about to undo his belt but stopped and climbed in beside her. As he began to stroke her ultra-soft skin, she said, "I hurry for you. Maybe I not be able to get all clothes off. I want you too much." And she didn't get him undressed completely as Buz could not hold off any longer, and they joined together as one.

After that night of lovemaking, Buz felt the definite need of a shower, so he went looking for a place to take a shower. After wandering around the campground being as quiet as possible so he wouldn't awaken those other campers who were still asleep, he finally found the shower room and quickly took his shower. That gratefully done, he hurried back to where he and Betty had made their camp spot. He wanted to hit the road as early as possible, so they hurried up to get their things packed away in the trailer and hit the road while there wasn't yet much traffic.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

**W**hile the roads were still mountainous, Buz drove the car carefully so he wouldn't get Goldy and the pack horse upset. The trailer was a big one, so it would accommodate Buz and Betty. The horses were in a separate section of the trailer with their own door and seemed to travel quite comfortably as long as Buz didn't drive too fast and cause the trailer to wobble too much.

The trip back to Pahrump was long and at times very arduous, and Betty needed to rest several times along the way; so every time Buz spotted a place they could park by a restroom, he pulled over, and Betty would sometimes take a nap. She hadn't told him yet, but he suspected that her pregnancy was causing her discomfort, and he wanted to be sure the trip wasn't causing any serious problems. He was uncertain why she hadn't told him she was uncomfortable, but he thought she may be uncertain herself what the problem was as she hadn't yet gone to see a doctor. It was a little hard with all the traveling they had been doing. So he was going to insist she go to the doctor as soon as they got back.

Another problem arises if she had a serious problem. They would have to delay going to the property they had bought while in Missoula. At least he would not allow her to sleep and live in their tent or their camper. It was coming on to winter weather, which is rather harsh in Montana, especially in the higher elevations where their property was. So Buz went back to the old sheriff and told him

he was back for duty and would seek the position for himself so the present man could retire. Buz was big, strong, and intelligent about the laws of the state, having educated himself at a young age when he decided he wanted to be a part of the law enforcement service of the state of Texas. That was before his father made the rather insulting statement that his older brother was getting the full control of the family ranch. Now that was no longer a problem, because he had found the girl he wanted, the job he knew he would enjoy, and thanks to the small fortune his grandfather had given him to compensate him for the loss of his fair percentage of the family ranch, he now had the land he had sought on which he could start his own ranch.

They finally reached Pahrump after two days of careful travel, and Buz did nothing until he had his Su Mei in to see the only doctor in town. He was quite confident that this doctor knew his business simply because of the number of girls working in the brothels and casinos that the town mainly consisted of; he had more than he could handle at times.

After a thorough exam, the doctor diagnosed no problems to worry about as long as she took good care to eat properly and get mild exercise and everything would be all right. Buz was quite relieved when he heard the verdict and went back to work and began saving money for the home he wanted built on the ranch property. His money was quite a bit dwindled from paying cash for the land, and Buz didn't want to use the majority of it for building a house. He would still have to pay for a good bull and a few cows to get started.

Buz had gone to work getting acquainted with all the brothel owners and told each one how he hoped they would understand that he didn't approve of these businesses, but it would have been no town at all if it weren't for the need for such a service to keep it from happening in Reno. He understood the need but wanted to insist that each girl be checked weekly for any disease they might contract from someone not healthy. That way they would keep the reputation up, and as a result the businesses and the economy of the town would be



kept well in balance. Any kind of trouble was to be referred to him to handle twenty-four hours a day.

By the time the elections were held, Buz was the only candidate and won a landslide victory. Shortly after that, his first son was born. Proud papa? I would guess so after all the photos he had taken and trotted around town, even to the girls at some of the better brothels where he had made friends with most of the owners by checking on them constantly.

It was a good thing he didn't have to tend to too many problems for the first month, because he knew he needed to be around Betty and the baby for those little unpleasant chores like changing messy diapers, cleaning up when he spit up the soured milk, and the easiest job of walking and rocking him when he wouldn't sleep. Buz wanted Betty to get as much sleep as she could so the next baby wouldn't be unwanted in any way. Then, too, he was anxious to get back to Montana and get someone started on plans for their new home. He figured Betty would be able to handle the baby on the trip in about three months, so he gave the mayor notice that he would need to find somebody to take his place as the only law in the town but gave him a piece of advice on the selection of someone to keep the town's reputation clean. He said it would be a good idea to spend some of the town's money to advertise the availability of the position in Reno and Las Vegas so he could get the best help possible.

The mayor was a little disappointed that Buz was leaving, because he had made some very helpful changes in the way the town was run, and most of the business owners had really taken to his huge frame with the persistent smile and friendly but firm handling of troublemakers. Even some of the troublemakers were trouble only because they had imbibed a little excessively and were sorry for it after their sobering-up sojourn in the town's little jail.

But when the mayor professed to be upset with his imminent departure, Buz explained that he had been planning to do this kind of thing for years, and more so since his own father had just plain



dumped him out of the business he loved not realizing what an effect he was putting on the boy's shoulders. Consequently, Buz had to make his own plans and had become a little antagonistic toward his father. That feeling had dissipated after his grandfather had sided with him and given him not only a long talking to but telling him he had opened a huge account for him with the local bank. Half of the fortune was in liquid assets of cash, the rest was in the form of a series of mutual funds that would grow, currently, at the rate of about 23 percent. If that was left alone, he would be a millionaire in about five years.

Buz's grandfather had told him during his long talk that he had given the ranch and all the cattle with the understanding that he was to pass it on to his boys when they became old enough to handle the business of running the ranch, and he had not remembered, so now the balance of his fortune was going directly to Buz who was properly amazed and couldn't find the words to thank his grandfather enough. "My hope is that your love of family will be restored and all your hard feelings for your own father will be forgotten," said Grandfather James.

"Oh, Granddad, until the day Dad as much as told me I was out of luck, and had to go to work for my brother, I was upset for sure, but I could never lose my respect and love of my father for something as foolish as this has been so. We'll get together and have a talk in a year or so, and I'll be sure and smooth everything out when I get my own ranch," declared Buz. And so he had prepared to leave on his long journey north in quest of some good land.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

**W**inter was almost over, but there was still a good deal of snow on the route Buz chose to get back to Montana. Fortunately the roads had been kept cleaned off by the state road crews in Nevada, Idaho, and Montana. So all Buz had to do was be careful of any slides that might occur along his chosen route. It was carefully that Buz drove those snow-covered portions of the mountainous route, and the care paid off with the safe arrival in Missoula. However, Buz was forced to find a motel where he could park his horse trailer and camper combined while he and his little family found a rental house to live in while they built their permanent home on the ranch land.

Buz wanted to save money in any way he could, so he planned to use one of his many talents to do as much of the work as he could himself. The first thing he had to do, of course, was smooth out the land where the foundation was to be laid, then the biggest job he had to leave to someone else was the pouring of the concrete. Once the floor had been poured, he started to lay the forms for the exterior of the house. The weather had turned warm, so Betty and Neil, his infant son, could sit outside and watch him work a part of the job he had to do while he was off work during the day. Thus it took him longer than he would like, but the amount of money he saved was worth the effort.

Betty took part in the work by helping him cut the timbers as he directed, thus she had a big part in the building of their home as she

would have if she were still living in the small village where she had been born had she not been sold into the profession he had relieved her of. He was so surprised at her insistence at helping that he felt humbled and didn't worry about her leaving Neil in the carriage while she was helping him. As long as the baby remained content to watch his mama helping. In fact, Buz found a tiny hammer and a scrap of waste lumber and gave him those implements so he could pound away like he was being a help as well.

By the time the weather started to get chilly in the afternoon, Buz didn't want the baby outdoors where he might catch cold, so he finished the framing of the house by himself and called in an electrician to finish up the wiring of the entire house. At that point, Buz asked to be taken off the night shift so they could move into the bedroom, and he would be around at night and could leisurely do the cabinets with Betty telling him where she would like to have them.

The most important part of building a house in the climate they were to live was the insulation. Buz made sure that the baby's room was triple layered, and the rest of the house was doubly so. The house was to be electrically heated, and if the power went out, they could keep the house reasonably warm by their fireplace.

So by the time winter had set in, the house was finished and the furniture they had brought out was all in place and just as they agreed. Betty wanted some things Buz wasn't sure they would need, but he hadn't paid attention to those things that his own mother had for her use, so he gave in to her feminine needs and made sure he didn't cause her to worry.

Now that the house was finished and Betty and Neil were comfortable, Buz could get busy at his job, doing so at his own pace and in his own style. The way he treated the people he ran into made him very popular. If he had to arrest someone for speeding, he would usually give them a warning and send them on their way, making sure they understood that their second ticket would be double the usual

amount. In handling his tickets in this manner, he got to know more people of the town. And in turn they got to know him.

But the intensive police-training program he went through at a young age was not being put to use in the style he had expected. He was getting anxious to take part in the apprehension of some criminal that had done something more evil than running a stoplight on the main thoroughfare of Missoula. Then again, he was glad he didn't have to worry his young wife by chasing after an armed and dangerous criminal. But he knew she would understand, because she knew why he was an officer of the law. He loved doing something that was a help for someone he didn't even know.

Betty was still in contact with her mother back in the hilly farmland of Southern China, and Betty wanted very much to have her mother by her side to help with her grandson. So Buz got information from the federal government and began corresponding with the state department without Betty's knowing it. After several months of writing back and forth with the Far Eastern representative, he was finally sent a form that included a large number of questions Betty alone knew the answers for. So Buz had to sneakily get those answers out of Betty without her knowing why she was being asked.

When Buz had gotten the answers he needed from his Su Mei, he finished filling out the necessary forms and sent them in. Another long period of waiting while everything was checked out and the determination made that there wasn't any connection with Communism, he was subsequently sent another long form to fill out. To top it all off, a representative of the state department was sent to check up on what kind of housing would be provided for the mother of Su Mei. Now Betty was really excited, but Buz would not tell her what he and the representative had discussed in private. Instead of telling her what the actual story was, he led her to believe that he was being checked out for special duty overseas. That was not what Betty wanted to hear at all, but Buz calmed her down by telling her that he



had turned down the foreign service because he didn't want her to be worried.

After another month or so, he received word that Betty's mother would be arriving at the Missoula airport. So he got Betty and little Neil packed into their old car, which was in fact a station wagon. The minute Betty stepped out of the house, she wanted to know why they were going anyplace in the station wagon. All Buz wanted to tell her was that he had found something for Neil to play with. And that was not a lie at all, because he knew that his grandma was anxious to see him and get a chance to play with him.

Not another word was said until they reached the airport, then little Neil started pointing at the planes landing, so Buz said, "Yes, punkin, we're going to go see one special plane landing." They of course had to find a parking place before doing anything else, so Buz cruised around until he found a place as close as he could, got out the stroller and put the excited little guy in it, and headed for the area where the plane carrying Betty's mother would land. Back in those days, all she would have to do would be to go through the immigration department's inspection, so Buz found out where that would be and took his little family there so Betty could see her mother debark from the plane, and she still hadn't figured out why they were going to meet someone.

So when Betty's mother finally came down the rickety stairs looking completely lost, Betty started to cry then said in a voice cracking with emotion, "Oh, is my mama. Buz, you so kind to me, you get way for my mama to come here? I so veddy happy. Not see my mama for fifteen year. Thank you! Thank you!" Then she started to go to her mother who hadn't gone through the line yet, so she was held back and couldn't get to her mother. Buz could tell she was just overjoyed at seeing her mother, and he couldn't wait to tell her that he had made plans with the state department that her visa was good for an indefinite time and she would be able to stay with her for the



rest of her life; and Buz had made arrangements so that he could add on to their home, so she could live just like she had her own home.

And to top it all off, he told her that she and her mother could go to a Chinese furniture store and pick out what she wanted for her three rooms. When at long last her mother was done with the immigration people, the mother and daughter could join in a very long and loving embrace, and Buz could also meet his mother-in-law who embraced him as well saying "Dwo sye" (Many thanks).

Buz said in reply, "You are certainly welcome, my love. I haven't seen you this happy in many long years, and I am also happy that you are surprised at seeing your mother. It took a long time doing it in secret so you would be surprised. I think I did good for you. Yes?"

"Oh, yes! I very happily surprised to see my mother again after so many years. I know she be happy too," replied one very happy young woman. And now the mama was through with the immigration people and came as quickly as she could to Su Mei and wrapped her in a bear hug, the two of them both needing a towel for all the tears they shed. Finally Betty brought her mother over to greet Buz, and she gave him a slight bow and said, "I never think I get to see my daughter again. We are very much in debt to you."

"You owe me nothing. I am just so happy I can do something for my loved one. I just wish now that my own family could have been here to see what happiness is like," said Buz.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

**A**fter the happy greetings at the airport, Grandmother Chen picked up little Neil and announced that she was more than happy to see her new grandson and rattled on in Chinese to Su Mei how proud she was that she now had the grandchild she had been hoping for when she and her husband had sold Su Mei to the friendly business man they knew would look after her and make sure she didn't get mixed up with the wrong kind of man. Buz wasn't yet conversant in Chinese and could only tell from the looks Betty's mother was giving him with a big smile between words. He was amazed at her ability to speak almost perfect English. Buz was to have a talk with her later and learn that she was taught by a woman from a missionary school in her village.

From the airport, they returned to their almost finished new home. There Su Mei's Mother insisted that she become the child's guardian, which Buz quickly agreed to. Betty was still breastfeeding him, so she wouldn't lose complete control of the raising of her child; but she recognized the necessity for someone to look after Neil while she was helping Buz do the painting of the house both inside and out, and that was going to take quite a while as Buz insisted on doing it correctly. To him, correctly meant an undercoat, then two coats of the color that Betty picked out. Buz was not at all pleased with the bright color that she picked, so he told her his reason for not liking

it and finally talked her into a color that did not glare as much, and everybody was finally satisfied.

When the house was finally finished, Buz felt he had made probably the best house in all of the state of Montana; certainly not the most luxurious but the most well planned for his thoughts of the future, convenience being the biggest consideration of his plans for the size of his family. He wanted five boys and two girls. Neil, being the firstborn, would get the best bedroom, and two more bedrooms for the other four boys, and a fourth bedroom for the two girls. Most of the rooms were on the second floor, but the master bedroom and Neil's were on the main floor, and two guest rooms were on the cooler level of the basement, along with a nice-sized rec room and a pool of almost Olympic size and a small bar that could serve their guests a libation if necessary, for business meetings, but basically it was more of a soda bar for when the kids got big enough to have a swimming party or a dance.

This was Buz's dream house, but now that Su Mei's mother had joined them, he thought it best that she have a nice comfortable home of her own; so after she had been there for a while and the ranch got going to the degree that would allow him to spend the money, he would build her the house of her desire.

Then the unexpected happened. One of the new hands that Buz had hired—when he was out checking on the cattle that he had bought when he had finished building the house and had the time, after working hours, to tend to his ranch—had come upon a dead body. Buz, being the only real detective the sheriff had on his staff, naturally was called on to do the investigating.

The most important matter taken into consideration was the ground around where the body had been found. Buz made sure that his hands were not involved and told them to take turns guarding the area so that nobody could mess up any evidence that he might be able to find. At the earliest possible hour of the following morning, Buz saddled up Goldy and rode out to where the body was being guarded

by Rich, his most reliable hand. He found Rich in a tent he had set up a short distance away from the body.

Rich told his boss, and the only investigating detective available in the whole county, that as far as he knew, no one had come even close to approaching the body since it had been discovered and that he would like to be of whatever help he could to discover who had done such a job on the woman that lay there barely hidden at all.

When Rich had shown such willingness to help, Buz reached into his saddlebag and pulled out a pair of gloves and a fair-sized bag then said, "OK, Rich. I can use all the help I can get. Put these gloves on and start about fifty feet away from the body and pick up *anything* that you can find that you wouldn't normally find out here on the range. Get yourself a sharp stick and draw a circle around the spot you find each item that you will put in the evidence bag. While you are doing this, you will need to watch very closely at the ground you are walking on. If you see any scuff marks or footprints, mark that area with your stick so I can find it without having to look for it. This was a pretty woman in all points, so it looks like it might be a lover's quarrel and she might have been shot right here.

"While you are doing your area, I will start just about opposite you and work my way toward you. When we meet we'll go at right angles back out to the extremities and see if we can cover all the ground around her in a wide enough circle so we don't miss anything. Any questions?"

"Not that I can think of, boss. This should be educational for me. I've been thinking we don't have much of a police force around the whole county and I'd like to be a part of it if I can get some free training from you," answered Rich.

"Well, if you are really sure you want the possible encountering of danger, I'll get you a permit for the use of your gun and let him know you are interested in being a part of the sheriff's department."

"Hey! That would be great, boss. Then I won't have to take any more sass from my old friends."

## CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

**W**hen Buz got to town to report the finding's details, he was at a loss, because he had, so far, nothing of value to report except that he was going to need more help scouting the scene of the crime. So he located the sheriff's office to ask for the help of the other deputy's experience. He wasn't sure that his ranch hand that wanted to be a deputy and help with the crime would take necessary precautions while doing his part.

Buz approached his superior officer with all the caution he could muster, because he had several problems, not the least of which was the lack of any progress on this case he'd been handed with all the confidence that he knew what he needed to do and the ability to get it done. So he simply said, "Sheriff, we've got a problem with this murder case, and I don't want to get it mucked up by inexperienced help. So to make the long story short, I'd like to get my ranch hand a badge of office to build up his confidence and his caution. There's a hell of a lot of ground to cover because the body has been dragged from one place to another, and not by any four-legged creatures. As soon as possible we need to have Deputy Charley out there to help, if thar's OK with you."

"Sure, Buz. I'll get a hold of Charley as soon as I can find him, and send him out to your place. The county has authorized me to have four deputies, but, until now, nobody has shown any interest in the positions, and we haven't really needed Charley, so I'll get the



paperwork ready for your young man to sign and get him on the payroll, and I'll send him a badge to wear, which you can take back out with you. While I'm at it, I think I'll come out there myself, soon's I find Charley, but I need to know just where on your property is the body located?" answered the sheriff.

"It's up on the northernmost section close to the road. You can't miss it, cuz' Rich set up a tent so he'd be comfortable while he's searching for clues, and he'll probably be resting after the long night he's had," answered Buz.

"OK," replied the sheriff. "I know the country pretty well around where your land lies, so I shouldn't have any trouble finding him. What are you going to be doing in the meantime, Buz? I think I will be needing you up there looking for clues?" asked the sheriff.

"Well, it's kind of personal with me up there on my own land looking for clues. Know what I mean? I'll be looking for a different kind of clue because of the way I think it happened," answered Buz. "I just feel that there is somebody here in town that has been shot. Rich, our new deputy is as much a stranger here in town as I am. Although the face was pretty well messed up with bruises, as if he'd been in a real brawl, Rich couldn't tell me who the victim was, so I'm hoping you or Charley know who the victim is. That will make the investigation a lot simpler," Buz continued.

"That sounds good to me. I'll just drop all the papers I was working on and get up there to where Rich is camped out, and get his signature on some of this paperwork so he will be wholly legal. Does he have a side arm he can depend on if the guilty party shows his face around the scene? If not I'll take along my extra."

"No need to bother, Sheriff. I took the liberty of deputizing him and he has his own weapon that we have been using to practice with, and he's almost better than me, so he'll come out better than the fugitive if it comes to that," answered Buz.

So the two parted, each one with his own mission. The sheriff headed for the bars in town looking for his deputy Charley. And Buz

headed for the hospital to find out if anybody had gotten treated for a gunshot wound. If he could find someone that had been shot, it would just about solve the case right on the spot. But he was not to be that lucky.

When Buz got to the hospital to inquire as to whether they had any patients come in with a gunshot wound, he was given the runaround until he took out his detective badge and identification card proving that he was in fact lawfully qualified to have that information. The intern that had waited on him then changed his tune a bit and sang another song. That one had the lyrics of "see the lead physician."

Hearing those lyrics led him on another search for the head man, and he was told that the man was busy at the moment—could he wait. By that time, Buz became other than his normal self, getting very upset with the apparent disinterest in the finding of a murderer, and he said, "I've got about five seconds to get the information I'm seeking before I pull out my .45 and start blowing a few holes in this room, and I'm quite sure that will not set well with anyone connected with this hospital. Now if you don't care enough to tell the Man that I need him to answer one question, I will commence to do as I say."

With that, the intern decided that he would be the one in trouble for not doing as asked, so he turned on the heel of his ER slippers and scooted out the door to get the Man, and about four minutes went by before a well-dressed gentleman came through the door in a bit of a hurry and walked right up to Buz and immediately said, "I'm so sorry our new help is not fully aware of the hospital rules. I am Dr. John Walker and I am in charge of this shift. What can I do to help you, sir?"

Buz answered, rather embarrassed at his loss of self-control, and said, "Doctor John, I am the new sheriff's detective and I need to know if there has been anyone treated for a gunshot wound in the last forty-eight hours? There has been a murder and I am investigating that problem that seems kind of rare around here."

The doctor didn't hesitate at all, saying, "The laws now require us to report any and all gunshot wounds we have treated, and I can honestly say, there haven't been any wounds treated in the last forty-eight months. There is, however, a doctor of rather shady operations that could have treated such a wound, but it would be like going to the dentist to have all your molars pulled out to get the truth out of him. The only way you could know is to check his trash barrel to see if there is any dressings or blood in the trash, then ask him."

Buz was surprised at the willingness of that doctor to help him and said so with, "I am again sorry I got that intern in any trouble but I was getting a little impatient with the runaround I was getting with a murder on my hands, and I am very much in debt to you for the helpful information you have given me. I can only say, thank you for your kind help. I'm sure we will run into each other again and I hope it is with the birth of my next child. Do you know, by chance, where this shady doctor operates from?"

"That's an easy one, Deputy. He has a very nice home with an addition to it that is where he does his operating, including abortions. It's on Twenty-Fifth and James Street. You can't miss it," answered the helpful doctor. They shook hands, and Buz departed to find the illegal doctor.

Buz took the information he was given and went straight out to his vehicle to navigate the streets he and Betty had driven around by the hospital before his young son was born, hoping to narrow the path to the hospital in the event they had to make it there in a hurry. But of course they had the baby delivered by the capable servant that had insisted she would take care of everything, and she had turned out to be very gentle and efficient.

Buz had no trouble finding the immense house of the crooked doctor. It was set back from the street a good ways, and access was via a long curved driveway, so Buz wouldn't have to walk far to reach the front door. Luckily also was the fact that he was driving his own

vehicle, because he felt that the sight of a county vehicle pulling into the driveway was preparation for the doctor to be on the defensive before Buz even got in the door. As it was, the doctor was anything but cordial in his greeting once Buz got by the receptionist.

When Buz extended his hand and introduced himself, he made sure he added the "detective" to his full name by saying, "Doctor, I'm the newly appointed sheriff's detective Buster Hagen, and I'm here seeking some information from you if you would be so kind as to tell me one way or another if you have treated anyone for a gunshot wound in the last forty-eight hours? I'm fully aware of your rights and patient confidentiality and all that, but I am not mentioning any one particular person. Just a yes or no answer doesn't impinge on anyone's rights, does it?"

The "doctor" looked at him with an almost blank stare and hesitated for a moment before saying, "Well, sir. You are quite right in all you are saying, and you act as though you knew what you were talking about, so I believe I would be foolish if I didn't answer you directly with the truth. So I will do exactly that. I had a fellow come in yesterday as I was about to close up. He was obviously in a great deal of pain clutching his left arm against his left side. The long and short of it was, he had two bullet holes in him, saying that he and a friend were having a fast draw contest between them and his friend got the better of the draw but wasn't supposed to fire his weapon. He then said, 'Since he acted as though he wanted to kill me, I fired back at him and he again shot me without killing me. So he knew I could shoot him between the eyes if I wanted to, he holstered his weapon and just took off.'"

Buz was a little amazed at the whole story, so he proceeded to ask, "Did you fill out the required report for the sheriff's office, sir?"

"I was about to when he suddenly took off, so I couldn't get any names or locations of the accident," replied the doctor.

Buz looked at him a little crossly and said, "Sir, the law requires you turn in a report of *any* shooting you treat. Matters not a whit

whether you have the names or locations. The mere report of a shooting starts an investigation, and the time saved can mean the difference between the time he leaves the area and the time he needs to prepare to leave. You follow me? I took the liberty of looking through your trash barrel to see if you had thrown away any bloody dressings, and since you had, you'd have been in the deepest of you know what if you had tried to hide the fact from me. You had him here for long enough to get a good description of him for me, so I'd appreciate it if you'd give me as close as you can, a good description of him, so we can put out a wanted bulletin on him."

"Well, I can try. I'm not good at drawing, but I'll do the best I can," said the doctor.



## CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

**B**uz had to climb in his truck and ride to town to report to the sheriff that he had a murder case on his hands and to see if he could get the deputy out to the scene to help gather any of the evidence there might be, and also to see if the sherriff wanted to be there himself.

The sheriff sort of shrugged his shoulders and said, "No, Buz, I think you probably know more than me 'bout investigating murders than I do. I'll just stay here in town and wander around the saloons and see if I can spot anybody that might be a guilty-lookin' party. I'll hunt up Jim for you and send him out to your place to help."

## CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

**A**rmed with the almost useless drawing of what the doctor had perceived as the likeness of the wounded man's description, Buz headed back to the supposed scene of the crime to find out what Rich and Charley had found in the way of clues, if any. Buz had decided to stop off at the ranch house and make sure that Betty and his young son were all right,

When he got to the house, he checked with Betty and her mother and found them to be acting normally for a family that has a murder victim right on their property. Before leaving, he went around the house to all the doors and windows to make sure the house was sealed up tight so nobody could get in without a key. Then he came to Betty and his son and gave them both a quick kiss and told them not to open anything unless he was home because of the danger presented by the possible proximity of the killer.

After stopping to check up on his family, he hurried on to the site of the murder. Arriving there about the same time as the sheriff and the only other deputy, they all got together with Rich to discuss what he might have found other than what Buz had earlier found, which was practically nothing except for a rifle cartridge which showed that he had jammed that one cartridge and subsequently ejected in what must have been a hurry, because he forgot to pick up such a piece of vital evidence. Wanting more in the way of evidence, Buz suggested a way they could cover a lot of the ground around the body, which

had already begun to attract the inevitable swarm of flies, because it was an unusually warm and dry day. Each man took an area of about twenty feet wide and a quarter mile long.

The sheriff's area covered that piece of ground closest to where the body was located, and when everyone was through searching his assigned area, it was him that discovered a bloody (dried-up) area about a hundred yards toward the road; and the blood was fairly heavy, so it was decided that the shooting had taken place there, but brought up the problem of why he had at first carried then dragged the body farther onto Buz's land.

In Buz's area of search, he had found a spot where the weeds had been crushed down behind a bunch of fair-sized rocks. That appeared to be where the shooter had tried to hide himself from the view of the victim, which suggested that the fight the two had been in had occurred elsewhere. Surely someone had seen the fight, because it had been one of very serious consequences. At any rate, Buz had to tell the sheriff what he thought was the best idea. That idea was to split up and find anyone who might have witnessed the fight. The sheriff did not oppose the idea but instead said, "I know you are going to make a good replacement for me when I retire, because I was thinking the same thing and I suggest that we all hop in our vehicles and head for town. Since Charley and I are more familiar with the south end of town, we will begin one of us on the east side and the other on the west side. You and Rich can do however you feel will get the results quickest. Your end of town is mostly housing, with the west side having the most in the way of apartments. If I had more reliable help I would put a man with you while you hit those apartments, because I have a feeling you are going to find the shooter himself in one of those apartments."

"Good thinking, Sheriff. As a matter of fact, I think Rich and I will join up to check the whole north end of town. That way, we'll be protecting each other. If one or the other of us finds anything suspicious, we'll radio the other and join hands to get answers. OK?"

"OK, Buz. I'm turning the lead on this case over to you. Anything you say goes," said the sheriff.

Buz was delighted that the sheriff had given him the lead. Something he'd dreamed of since he was a kid of ten years old.

The first batch of apartments produced nothing but a couple of angry residents wondering what the blazes they'd have to do with any murders. Buz and Rich paid no attention to the angry people, just explaining to them that they were trying to catch a murderer before he could cause any more trouble, then thanking them for their time and walking hurriedly away to the next apartment.

In the next block, there were nothing but apartments, with two sets of apartments on both sides of the street, fairly obviously owned or at least built by the same contractor as all the apartments looked the same. Rich knocked on the door of the first upstairs apartment and got an immediate answer. By the time Buz was through explaining what they were looking for, the resident got a little excited and nervously said, "I don't want to get mixed up in any troubles, Officer," and started to close the door. Both Rich and Buz knew the man had the information they wanted, so Rich blocked the door well enough to keep it from closing and hollered, "Hold on, sir! You are not going to get mixed up in this unless you withhold information from the law and that is a serious violation."

The man then released his pressure on the door and meekly said, "Sir, I have been threatened by my neighbor two doors down and if he hears you talking to me, he'll know I've been asked, and he'll come down on me as soon as you have left."

Buz, quickly and as quietly as possible, said, "I understand your fright, sir, so the best thing you can do, is let us in while you tell us why he is a danger to you, then we'll quietly leave and come back later with reinforcements and go talk to this man you are afraid of, and if he is the man we are looking for, we will remove him from being able to harm you in any way."

With that assurance, the man opened the door and let them in; but before Rich could enter, Buz turned to him and said, "Go down to the car and radio the sheriff to get up here pronto. Tell him we are almost positive we have the man we want but that he is apt to cause trouble for the whole apartment complex, so we'll need all the help we can muster, and if he'll call the city police department and give them a pleasant hello giving them the situation, maybe he'll muster his riot squad or whatever he calls them. Also tell them he is believed to have a high-powered rifle, so they will know what to prepare for. Then get backup here as quickly as you can and don't make any more noise than you can help. Oh! I almost forgot. Grab the shotgun out of the car and bring it back with you."

"OK, boss. I'll be as quick and as quiet as I can and be right back," said Rich as he scurried down the flight of stairs at the far end of the building.



## CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

**R**ich got down the stairs without arousing the attention of any of the rest of the seven apartments in the complex and got his message off to the sheriff, who said that he would contact the chief of police of the city of Missoula and hopefully get his riot squad out to help. Then Rich hurried back to the endangered apartment to make sure he was available to prevent his boss from getting hurt by whatever action the crazed man might start in the way of trouble.

Waiting for the time when help would arrive, Buz sat with his shotgun across his lap, hoping in one mindset that the suspect would remain in his apartment until the help got there. Yet in another state-of-mind, he sort of hoped the crazy guy would come out and start to run or look for some kind of trouble. Buz wanted to end his (the shooter's) attempt to get away with shooting his friend or foe; the motive for the killing from a hidden spot had not yet been determined as no one had been able to talk to the man. Buz could only guess that, after a frenzied fight, an agreement had been made to talk over and settle the disagreement, and the shooter had decided he wasn't going to agree to any settlement that was to be suggested by the victim. Instead he had found a spot from which he thought he could end the problem for good, or evil if you thought it over. Evidently his aim had not been good enough on the first shot, and in attempting to get off a second, his rifle had jammed and the victim had gotten off a shot

himself and had come very close to turning the tables on the killer as he had hit the killer about six inches from his heart.

Buz decided that they were never going to know the reason for moving the body from where he'd been hit fatally to where it was found so that it would not look like a shooting with the idea of ending their argument with the victim not having any say in the outcome. All this was conjecture, and the whole story looked like it had no answers as to cause.

As soon as Buz saw the sheriff and his other deputy, Charley, drive up on the street below, he hefted the shotgun up to readiness and motioned for the sheriff and/or the deputy to come up the far walk, so both sides of the shooter's door would be well covered. As the sheriff and his deputy approached quietly and cautiously, Buz stealthily approached the door; and using the barrel of the shotgun as a knocker, he rapped on the door. Unbeknownst to Buz, the shooter had seen the shotgun through a slight opening in his curtains, and he spent a few seconds getting his high-powered rifle out of hiding and jacked a shell into the chamber. That done, he lifted the rifle to his shoulder and, without a word being exchanged, he fired a shot at where the door knob was.

Now there was absolutely no reason to think this man had gone off his rocker and was also without a doubt guilty of the murder of his former friend. Buz decided that he didn't want to have to kill this man when the case was going to end up as an insanity plea. So risking his own safety, he used the shotgun to blow a hole in the door so he could be heard and started to tell the shooter that he knew the story and that he wanted the man alive so he could stand trial and maybe commissioned to a hospital for the insane where he could tell his story and get help for what he had done. When he had finished telling him that, he could hear the man blubbering like a baby, then heard him trying to jack another shell into the rifle, so he knew he was safe in charging the man but drew his .45 as he ran into the badly disheveled room and grabbed the barrel of the rifle away from the

man as he was apparently trying to shoot himself. The sheriff came in through the ruined door with his arm holding his big cannon pointed at the man's face. When he saw that Buz had the rifle in his own hands, he lowered his weapon and got out his handcuffs and cuffed the guy to the bed. Now the guy was crying and saying, "I didn't mean to kill him. He was my friend, and we just had an argument, and I guess I went crazy. You gotta believe me! I didn't want to kill him. I was only trying to scare him. Please, guys. I didn't mean to kill him."

The sheriff was really quite doubtful of such a story after all the planning that must have been done to trap the man and shoot him, so he said, "All right, George. You can tell it to the judge, and he'll decide whether you go to trial or the hospital. Right now, you're going to jail. You're just very lucky you didn't get another shell into that rifle or Buz would have put one or two holes in you."

Buz didn't make any comment to that statement, because he knew he would have gotten there in time to grab the rifle and avoid having to shoot a sick man; but he was glad it was so easy, because he knew he would have used his bulk to subdue him, and that would probably result in one or the other of the two getting banged up. Buz just looked up at the ceiling and mouthed, "Thank you, Lord."

The next step was an easy one. Buz took out his cuffs and asked Charley for his and hooked the two sets together, then cuffed George's ankles so he could only take short steps. Next they undid the sheriff's cuffs from the bed and proceeded to walk George down to the city police car and stowed him in the backseat.

At that point, the chief of police got his chance at glory by carting George off to the city jail. As the police chief left with the prisoner, the sheriff stepped up to Buz, put his hand on his shoulder and said, "That was a fine job of arresting you done, my boy. I'm mighty proud to have you for a deputy, but I hope you don't risk your life in that way every time you catch a criminal that has just recently murdered a man. That was a very brave move, but still dangerous as the devil."

"Not really, Sheriff. I could see him struggling with that rusty rifle, and I knew I was only in danger if he could get to his sidearm, and I was pretty sure that was in his bedroom."

"Well, the ugly job is done and it turned out very nicely, but, still, you did a very sound and safe job of capturing poor George. He's been trouble for a lot of people, but the job you did on him should get a lot of notice in the paper here and I wouldn't be surprised if that word got spread around the country and made you a lot of supporters for when you run against me for this post of sheriff. You even impressed the chief of police and that takes some doing," said the sheriff.

George was taken to the city jail, where he spent the night. The following day, he was brought before the judge. After listening to the court-appointed defense attorney tell his version of the case against poor old George, the judge decided that, after due process, he would sign the papers for committance to the county's hospital for the criminally insane where he was to be examined for his mental state. He was found to be mentally deranged and a danger to the public. Thus no trial was necessary, and Buz did not have to appear and testify against him.

## CHAPTER THIRTY

**A**fter seeing the guilty party taken to the county hospital for the criminally insane, Buz took his own car from the county lot and hurried home to his ranch and his wife, Betty. He was afraid she might have misunderstood what she may have heard on the radio, and he wanted her to know that the whole episode was now over and the guilty party had been judged insane and was no longer a threat to anyone, except of course his handlers at the hospital.

Betty and her mother were both relieved. Now Betty felt safe in expressing her concerns for Buz's presence at the scene of the guilty party's capture. She said, "Di Ur, I not like for you to be sheriff and have to go after bad people that way."

Now Buz was upset, having obtained the very kind of work he dreamed of since being only ten years old; he didn't want to lose his Wife over a job, so he said, "My Su Mei, I am so sorry I make you nervous at the kind of work I enjoy. There will probably not be another murder case like this one and I won't have to be out of the office even if we do have another. My deputies know what I want done in any case that might come up and they can handle the problems themselves. Besides, I only will have this job for six years until the ranch is producing our living, so I won't need to have the job anymore. Rich should be able to take over and be elected like I was. He's a good man, and he wants my job very much, so if the ranch is



doing well before the six years is up, I can resign and let him have the responsibility. Does that seem all right to you, sweetheart?"

"Oh my Di Ur. I feel so bad because I fear you get hurt, but I see now that you had to do this thing for you life be complete. I not want to spoil you dreams. I have my mamma-san now and you make my life complete so I try to do same for you. You just call me when you might be late so I not have worry for you, OK?"

"Anything you wish, sweetheart," said Buz. And he took her in his arms and could feel the stiffness go out of her as he did so. Putting one hand on her beautiful hip, he said, "Now let's go see our child then, I think it's time I took a little extra time saying good night to you as we try to add another boy to the family. Does that sound like a good idea to you, my love?"

"Why you have to ask, my Di Ur? You know that is why I am here, to be with you when you feel like make love to me. I want nothing more than to service you desires, my Di Ur." And as they walked slowly toward the huge master bedroom, she was already undoing his huge belt buckle so she could feel his erection.

Once in the door of the bedroom, Buz had her in his arms, kissing her as he carried her to the oversized bed he'd insisted on and finally got for a small fortune. He gently laid her on the bed, and his pants were finally down around his boot tops, so it was easy to kick off both his boots and his pants, and she was holding the covers up for him to climb in beside her. Nobody needs to ask what went on for the next few hours as they both exhausted themselves practicing what had brought them their firstborn child, but they fell asleep in each other's arms and Buz still inside of her.

By the time Buz's term as sheriff had expired and Rich had won the election for sheriff as Buz had predicted, Betty was pregnant with her fourth child, and she hoped it would be another girl. But she knew that Buz would not make a fuss if it indeed turned out to be a girl. They could always make another attempt. So far Betty had had no difficulty giving birth, and she made no attempt to cease producing

another child for the man she adored. And too, she had not begun to show the strain of so many childbirths and always exercised to bring her body back to the near perfection Buz had married her for. They had now been married for ten years, and their ranch had continued to grow, and Buz had continued to add to his burgeoning income by acting as advisor to the sheriff's office and the Missoula Police Department.

Buz had begun to think about his three boys and his daughter. The oldest was nine years old now, and the schooling he and his siblings were receiving was through the efforts of a tutor who was once a teacher in the Missoula school system. He was growing more wealthy every day and was known throughout the state for his generosity. He was thinking of the future and how he was going to take the loss of daily contact with his children when they had to leave for the university of their choice. He did have the hope that one or more of them, save the daughter, would love the ranch enough to want to remain here and do the supervising of the growing crew that worked for the ranch. Just another thought for the future and the retention of his loving family togetherness.

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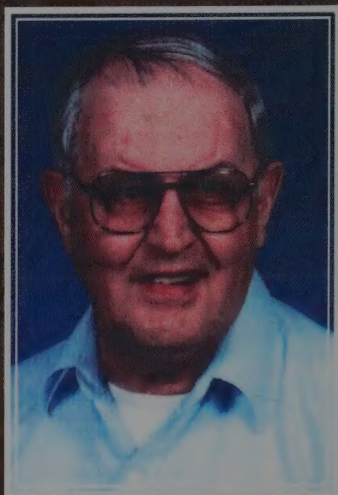
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